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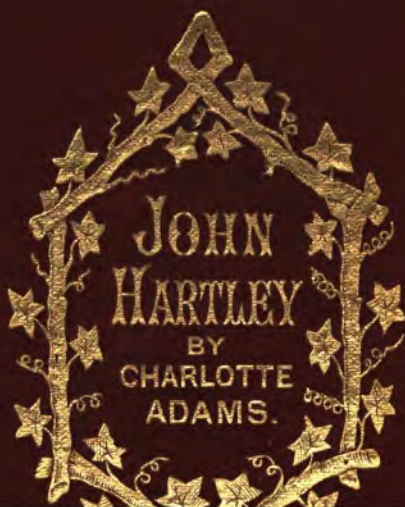
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Mr. Beane's Pony.

Front.

# JOHN HARTLEY

AND

## HOW HE GOT ON IN LIFE

BY  
CHARLOTTE ADAMS,  
AUTHOR OF "BOYS AT HOME," "EDGAR CLIFTON," ETC.



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# JOHN HARTLEY,

AND

## HOW HE GOT ON IN LIFE.

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### CHAPTER I.

It was a charming morning in the height of summer, a soft breeze was blowing, the sun was shining bright in the blue sky, while the church bells were ringing a merry peal, and the High Street of the fine old town of Downton seemed all bustle and animation. Gentlemen's carriages, with the coachmen and footmen wearing white favours, were gliding swiftly along, or turning sharp round the corners into the chief thoroughfare, or stopping to take up company at the houses of the principal inhabitants of the place. Here and there might be seen hurrying along, a baker with a basket of rolls on his arm, or a pastrycook with a tray of tarts and jellies on his head; while young girls from the national and other schools were trooping along with their laps or hands full of sweet, gay wild flowers. In several places groups of people had gathered together, and stood waiting, as if in expectation of some sight or other that was to gratify their curiosity.

"What is all this row about?" said a cross-looking man in a leather apron, with a bundle of shoes under his arm, as he roughly pushed his way among a party of neatly-attired women of the poorer

class, who were standing watching at one of the corners of the High Street. "I say, what is it all about?"

"Oh! it is you, Master Pool," said a gentlemanly woman, as she looked up and recognised in the man who had driven against her a shoemaker who was her near neighbour in the lane where she lived. "Good day to you," continued she, good-naturedly; "you are just in time to see the pretty sight; they will be out of church directly."

"Pretty sight, indeed!" repeated Pool, contemptuously. "I want no such pretty sights. The rich are always after some foolery or other."

"Do not call it foolery, Mr. Pool," said the woman, whose name was Hartley; "we must not give such a name to the signs of rejoicing that are taking place when such a nice young lady as Miss Gower is married."

"And married to a good young man too," put in another of the bystanders.

"The son of Mr. Anderson, the banker," continued Mrs. Hartley; "and I trust he will make her a good husband, for a better brought up or better disposed young lady cannot be."

"I wish, at any rate," said Pool, "that they would keep their nonsensical shows to themselves, and not set every idle boy and girl running after them, and causing a poor hard-working man to carry out his jobs himself. There's my boy Sam has been out all the morning, instead of being in the way to do what I want."

"He will be back soon, I dare say," said Mrs. Hartley, wishing to say something that might soften the man's ill-tempered mood; "your boy has only just gone, I dare say, with the other children to see their sisters strew the bride's pathway up to the

church with the flowers they have been so busy gathering."

A short conversation then followed about the place where the bride was going to live; what would most likely be the amount of her fortune; what her mother could afford to give her; and then whether old Mr. Anderson was really as rich as people said he was.

"He has many young ones to provide for," said one of the women.

"And one poor boy is a cripple," said another.

"Oh! they will all do well, no fear of that," said Pool. "Old Anderson is rich enough; he is always on the look-out for his own interest, buying this piece of land, or selling that, scraping all together he can get, or screwing up the rents of the houses that belong to him."

"He has not raised my rent," said one of the bystanders.

"Nor mine," said another. "I think him a good sort of man, take him altogether."

"He is rich," said Pool, angrily, "and that is enough for me. Rich," repeated he; "and so he is; and what business has he, I should like to know, to be rich and I poor?"

"What, Master Pool, at your old sport," said a good-natured-looking man, coming up at the moment, with a basket of carpenter's tools in his hand; "something to say against your betters, as usual?"

"My betters!" repeated Pool, scornfully; "I have no betters, or ought not to have."

"Yes, but you have," said the carpenter; "the rich are your betters in a worldly point of view; and it's no credit to a poor man to speak disrespectfully of them. For myself, I get work enough to do, and am content."

"I don't want for work neither," said Pool; "but that is not the question. What I ask is, why is one man rich and another poor?"

"If there were no rich, the poor could get no employment," replied the carpenter.

"You do not, or will not, understand," said Pool, much excited. "Now look you here, Mr. Cobb: you are a carpenter, and I am a shoemaker; you build a house for a rich man to live in, and I make or mend his shoes, while he rides about in his carriage without any toil or trouble, or any of the cares that sit so heavy on the poor man's shoulders. I would——"

What more he was going to add was interrupted by every one's attention being drawn off to the bridal procession as it passed by, after the performance of the marriage ceremony at church, on its way to the house of the bridegroom's father, where the wedding breakfast was prepared.

Most of the little group who have just been spoken of as gathered together to see the pretty sight were in good humour, and well inclined to be pleased; and many an approving observation was made as each gay carriage passed by in succession. Sometimes it was the horses that were praised, sometimes the conveyance, but more frequently it was the persons who constituted the bridal party that came under notice.

All were anxious to get a peep at the bride, but she sat so back in her carriage, and was so closely veiled, that though one old woman declared, that although she looked pale, she had a smile on her countenance, there was little to gratify general curiosity in her appearance. But then great amends were made by the bridesmaids, all dressed in white and pink, with lovely flowers in their hands; and the

groomsmen who came next made a goodly show, with their white satin rosettes with an acorn in the middle, placed on the breasts of their coats. They were all merry, happy-looking young men, friends of the bridegroom, and more than one among them smiled kindly on the lookers-on as they drove gaily past. Then not least in point of interest was "Old Anderson" himself, with a fine new coat on, sitting bolt upright in his family coach, "looking as proud and happy as a king;" and beside him sat, a tear of emotion still resting on her withered cheek, his wife, the faithful partner of his joys and sorrows; and opposite was his wife's sister, the poor portionless woman to whom he had given a home in the days of her adversity, and whom he ever treated as a sister, and taught his children to pay respect to as to a second mother.

This sight, which had gratified others, only seemed to have increased Pool's ill humour.

"And now," exclaimed he, as the last of the carriages passed on, "they are going to cram themselves with good things, and drink more glasses of wine in a day than I get half-pints of poor beer in a week."

"It is a day of rejoicing, Master Pool; you should recollect that," said Mrs. Hartley, mildly

"Rejoicing!" repeated the man; "yes, I know that well enough; and why am not I, and you, and Cobb, and all poor working drudges rejoicing too? Why are we not at such a feast?"

"We are in a different station," replied Mrs. Hartley. "We are poor, and they are rich."

"But I would have no rich; all should be equal, if I had my way," said Pool.

"Then," replied Cobb, "you would be for having a state of things that never could exist. There will



always be a difference in men's stations as long as the world lasts. But it does not follow that the rich will always be rich, nor that the poor will always be poor. For instance, look to the history of this very Mr. Anderson who makes you so angry."

"Well, what of him?" asked Pool, impatiently.

"Don't you know what I allude to?" said Cobb.

"Not I," answered Pool.

"I remember now," continued Cobb, "that you are not a bred and born man of this place, or you would have heard what was much talked of when I was a boy. It was that Mr. Anderson's grandfather was a very poor man; poorer than you or I, for he came to this town an orphan lad, with hardly a rag to his back, or a shoe to his foot."

"Then he stole other people's money to begin life with, I suppose," said Pool, gruffly.

"On the contrary," replied Cobb; "he was an honest, well-disposed boy, and he begged so hard of a little tradesman in this place to be allowed to work for him for his keep, that he got employed; and by diligence and steady resolves to do his duty in every way, he got into such favour with his first employer that he recommended the lad to a better situation."

"I have heard it said," put in Mrs. Hartley, "that this young Anderson, 'Diligent Dick,' as people used to call him, was never known to waste a minute's time, and that when he had earned sufficient money, he put himself to an evening school, and when he had learned to read he passed every moment he could call his own in studying books he either hired or borrowed."

"Till by degrees," continued Cobb, "he rose higher and higher, till at last he got a situation as clerk in the very bank of which his grandson is now *the head*."

"That is all very well," said Pool, in the same ill-tempered tone, "for those who were born scholars: I was not."

"Then little ventures in trade often succeed," said Cobb, "and from a small beginning a man may rise, if——"

"Don't tell me," interrupted Pool, "about what a man might do. What I want is my share of this world's goods. I would have everything equally divided. I am as much a man as a lord, and he has no right to be rich while I am poor."

"You have got very wrong notions into your head, neighbour, I must say," continued Cobb: "the rich and poor mutually help each other."

"So much the worse," said Pool; "one man is as good as another; and that is what I shall teach my boys as they grow up."

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## CHAPTER II.

"HERE come the children," said Mrs. Hartley, as a boy and girl, neatly clad, and with clean hands and faces, came up to where the little group of persons spoken of in the last chapter were standing.

"Oh, mother! it was such a pretty sight!" exclaimed the boy.

"And I threw all my flowers down before the bride as she came out of church," said the girl; "and she smiled and nodded to the school-children as she passed along. Oh, it was such a pretty sight!"

"We will tell you all about it, mother," said the boy; and he and his sister were beginning eagerly

to speak of what they had seen, when Pool interrupted them to know if they had seen anything of Sam, his "disobedient, lazy boy," as he called him; when, turning round, he caught sight of the truant, and darting forward, took hold of him, and giving him two or three hearty cuffs, put the parcel of shoes into his hands, ordering him to take them to their owners, and at his peril to stay out a moment longer than was necessary.

The boy, screaming with pain, set off running as fast as he could to get out of his father's reach, while Pool sullenly took his way home.

"Oh! dear, dear!" said Mrs. Hartley, as the boy's cries rung in her ears; "that is not the way to bring up children."

"If they are lazy and disobedient," said Cobb, "whose fault is it but the parents'? Children should be instructed from their earliest years to be docile and obedient."

"From their first months, I would say, Mr. Cobb," observed Mrs. Hartley; "people do not begin half early enough to train their young ones in the right way. Why, a mere baby, by good management and gentle treatment, can be taught to control its cries when they arise from passion or ill temper."

"Surely you don't mean to say so?" said a woman standing by—"a baby!"

"Indeed I do," replied Mrs. Hartley; "you yourself must have noticed how soon an infant learns to love a smiling face, and to show dislike to cross looks; well, so soon does its little mind begin to unfold, and in a measure to know the difference between good and evil. But," continued she, cheerfully, "I must not stand here chatting any longer; I must mind my business at home. Come, children;

come, John; come, Betsey, we have all had a little holiday, and now we must go and work." And each of her young ones catching hold of her hand, she bid good morning to her neighbours, and hastened off to the humble dwelling which her good sense and good temper made a pleasanter abode than many a rich mansion where ill-will and discontent prevail.

Certain it is, let the station in life be what it will, we in a great measure make or mar our own happiness.

Mrs. Hartley was a widow. At the time of the opening of our tale her husband had been dead nearly three years: during the latter part of his life he had been a great sufferer, and was at times wholly unable to work for the support of himself and family; and it was owing to the industry and good management of his wife that they not only continued to live, but that the poor man was supplied with many little comforts which served to alleviate his sad state. But though a most attentive wife and diligent workwoman, Mrs. Hartley never neglected her children. She had been brought up by a careful mother herself, and it was the first wish of her heart to see her children grow up good. Whenever it was in her power she sent them to school, and by precept and example strove to the utmost to train them in the right way. Earnestly did she pray for heavenly guidance in the management of her children, and she kept a constant watch over herself that she might not by word or action influence her boy or girl to do what was wrong.

John and Betsey Hartley were naturally kind-hearted and affectionate, and loved their mother dearly, and were desirous by their conduct to give her pleasure and satisfaction; still, like all other children, they had faults. Of this their mother made

them thoroughly aware, and whenever they did wrong they strove by repentance and promises of amendment for the future to atone for their bad conduct. Their conscience too was tender, and often checked them in any propensity to do evil, and when unhappily they gave way to anything that tempted them out of the right path, it was sure after a time to make itself very unpleasantly felt.

Miss Gower was a general favourite with the children of the place, and the morning after her marriage the young Hartleys were much more inclined to talk about her, and all the gay doings connected with her marriage, than to work. Their mother gently but firmly reminded them that they had had a great deal of pleasure, and that they must now turn their attention to serious matters. There were, she said, the school lessons to prepare for the morrow, after which there were many things necessary to be done about the house, and in the little yard and garden. The children felt the truth of what their mother said, and immediately set about their duties cheerfully and willingly; and so well did they command themselves, that not a word more was said about the wedding till dinner-time, when, after grace had been said, and the little party were seated at table, the subject burst forth again with renewed vigour.

"Mother," exclaimed John, "how I should like to be young Mrs. Anderson's servant when I go to place!"

"You, John!" cried Betsey, laying down her knife and fork, and laughing.

"Why not?" said John, boldly, unheeding his sister's laugh; "people say that Mrs. William Anderson is to have a page as well as a footman, and pages are generally somewhere about my age."

"Why, you are not yet twelve years old," said Betsey.

"I shall be twelve at Michaelmas," replied John, "and that is old enough; is it not, mother?"

"I do not think," said Mrs. Hartley, "that age is of so much consequence in a page as other qualities."

"What other qualities, mother? I am tall and strong for my age, as you say yourself, and you have taught me to be honest and to speak the truth."

"I trust through God's blessing I have done so," reverently replied Mrs. Hartley; "and you, my boy, are a good, obedient child generally, and a comfort to me in many respects; but still I fear you would not do for a situation like the one you speak of."

"Why not?" asked John, anxiously. "I know that I am a great expense living at home, and that it is now time I should endeavour to maintain myself."

"Certainly, my dear," replied Mrs. Hartley. "I shall be glad to get some employment for you before winter comes; till then I shall do my best to keep you comfortably at home; for our good clergyman and the schoolmaster both say that children should not be taken away too early from school."

"But mother," said John, "if I could get such a good place as the one I wish for, you would let me go, would you not? You said I should have gone to Mr. Barker's last month, if he would have hired me."

"True, I did say so," replied Mrs. Hartley, "for I think you might have done very well in his service."

"And why not in Mrs. William Anderson's, mother?"

"Because, John, though you are honest and speak the truth, you are too rough to be a lady's page, and have many awkward tricks that I have not been able as yet to break you of."

The boy looked very grave, and his mother went on.

"Even now," continued she, "while we are talking about manners, look how you are sitting, with your chair tilted up, one elbow on the table, and your hand rubbing up your hair."

John drew himself up into a better attitude.

"And I should like to see you, when a lady or gentleman speaks to you, touch your cap; and when any one comes into the house, I should wish you to stand upright, instead of lounging along on the dresser as you did yesterday when our landlord came in to talk about the rent. A respectful manner is always an advantage."

"So teacher says," put in Betsey.

"And you should learn to tread lighter, John," said Mrs. Hartley: "ladies and gentlemen would not like to be waited upon at their meals by a boy who stumped along, making as much clatter as a little donkey's hoofs would do trotting round the room."

Betsey laughed, and even John could not forbear a smile, notwithstanding the vexation he felt, as his unfitness for a lady's place was pointed out.

"I keep my face and hands clean always when I can," said he, desirous of saying something in his own defence, or rather it should be said in his own favour, for he felt the truth of his mother's observations.

"You do so, my dear," replied Mrs. Hartley; "and in many things you are quick and handy

enough, and I do not doubt but that you will get a respectable place in time."

"Yes, mother," said John; "but," added he, looking very red and speaking with great earnestness, "I do not want a clown's place; I do not want to be what they call a clodhopper. I want to live with ladies and gentlemen."

"I hope, John," replied his mother, gravely, "that you are not getting high notions—notions above your station."

"No, mother, I am not," said the boy. "I know I am born poor, and that service is my portion, and I am quite content; but one may have a choice as to whom one would like to serve."

"That is true," said Mrs. Hartley; "and there is no objection as long——" she did not finish what she was going to say, for John was so eager to speak that he went on:

"There is so much to be learned in an upper situation; and it would be so pleasant, mother, when waiting at table, to hear ladies and gentlemen talk about their travels, the wonderful sights they have seen, and the strange countries they have visited."

"I am afraid," said Mrs. Hartley, smiling, "that you would do your business but badly if your attention was taken up by listening to the conversation that was passing."

"Oh no, mother!" said John; "I should be always watching to do what was required, for it would be such a pleasure to wait upon such folks. Don't laugh, mother, I am sure I could do in time."

"Well, dear," said Mrs. Hartley, "I am not going to laugh at you; for there is no harm in trying to better one's condition; but wherever you go to live, my child, it must be with well-disposed people,



who care for the souls as well as the bodies of their servants, or you will never have my consent."

"I am sure, mother, that many of the gentry are very careful of their servants. Will Richardson, when he was over here for a holiday, was telling me about Lady Rivers, where he lives, who goes three times a week to the night school, and reads to the youths, and lets them read to her, and tells them to ask any questions they like, and she has set up a lending-library for them, and they can take home any books they like."

"And, mother," said Betsey, who entered very warmly into her brother's views, "Mr. Anderson has all the servants up night and morning to family prayers; and he reads a chapter to them, and they all go to church as regular as Sunday comes. And it is the same at Squire Bentley's and Mrs. Bowen's. The gentry, as they are called, are the best sort of people, after all."

"Not the best, Betsey dear," said her mother; "there are good in all ranks of life."

John repeated that he did not want to be a farm-servant; and the conversation dropped, Mrs. Hartley having first observed that no doubt the servants had all been chosen and hired before the bride went on her wedding tour.

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### CHAPTER III.

AFTER dinner the boy went to work in the garden, and the little girl was sent on an errand for her mother. Betsey was not gone long, for she was in *haste to return* to her brother, as she had gained in-

formation on a point about which she knew he was much excited. Having delivered her message, she went to find John. He was standing on a ladder, nailing some straggling branches of a monthly blowing rose against the back of the house.

"I have news for you," cried she.

The boy turned eagerly round, and she continued: "It is none of the boys we thought of, not Jem Brown, nor Will Campbell, nor any of the town boys, that have got the place; it is Robert Bell, whose father keeps the Plough, the little inn half a mile below Downton."

"I remember the lad," said John; "he used at one time to come to the Sunday-school. I never liked him, for I thought he had too good an opinion of himself."

"He is related to the cook who lives with old Mrs. Anderson," said Betsey; "and she, it is said, persuaded Mrs. William to engage him. People say he is a smart, active lad, and just fit for a lady's page."

"Maybe," said John; and he went on with his hammering, but so violently that his sister called to him and told him he was breaking an old board in the house to pieces.

"I don't know what I am doing," said John, coming down the ladder. "I am so vexed at what mother says about my awkwardness."

"Not vexed at anything mother says for our good," said Betsey.

"No," replied John; "she is right enough, no doubt; but I am vexed to learn that I am such a rough chap, and so unfit for the sort of place I wish for."

"You will improve if you take pains," said his sister, kindly.

"I want to tell you what I have been thinking of," said John; "are you busy, or can you listen now, and we will go and talk in the arbour?"

Betsey said she would run in and see if her mother wanted her just then; and this not being the case, she and her brother repaired to the little arbour at the bottom of the garden. It was a pleasant place this little arbour; it had been chiefly formed by the children themselves, and the creepers and sweet-flowering plants, set in the ground a year or two ago, had now grown up and twined over the top and round the sides, till a cool and grateful shade was afforded from the bright beams of the summer sun. Here the boy and girl would come with their books and their work whenever they were at liberty to do so.

"Well, John," said Betsey, as she and her brother seated themselves, "what is it you have to tell me?"

"Something," replied John, "that started all at once into my head, just as you were telling me not to break the boards."

"Well?" said Betsey, as her brother stopped short as if something was working in his mind.

"It is something quite grand," said John, as if he doubted how his sister might take what he was about to say. "I am going to get Howard the recruiting-sergeant to drill me."

Betsey made no exclamation at this announcement, but looked as if she wished to hear more; and her brother went on.

"Howard is away just now, but when he comes back, two or three of the tradespeople, and Mr. Beach at the Hill Farm, are going to join together, and pay the sergeant to drill their sons, and I want to go along with them."

"What, with tradespeople's children!" said Betsey; "they will not like that."

"Why not?" said John; "there's Harry Barnes, the cooper's son, is to be one of them; and I am sure his Sunday clothes are not a bit better than mine; and I shall pay my money as well as the best of them."

"But where is the money, John?" cried Betsey; "where is that to come from?"

"That is the chief thing I want to talk to you about," said her brother. "I must sell some of my rabbits."

Now Betsey was very fond of the rabbits, and John feared she would object to his parting with them. But he explained to her that when he first got them he always had a view to making money by them; and then he reminded her that there were several young ones, and that when they were grown to their full size he should not be able to keep all, for the rabbit-hutch would not hold them. Betsey knew that this was all true, and as she was a good-natured little girl, and loved her brother, she offered no opposition to his scheme, but only asked, rather gravely, who John thought would buy the rabbits, and thus put him in possession of the money he wanted.

John told her that he thought it very likely that the clergyman's children would take two, for they had been very much pleased with looking at them the last time they had called with their papa at the cottage.

Betsey said she thought it not unlikely they might: but she said it would be best for her brother to inquire first if he would be allowed to join the other boys in their drill. This he replied he would do, adding, that he was sure he should not be

refused, for he would get Mr. Spicer, the grocer, with whom he was something of a favourite, to speak for him. That, John said, was not the difficulty—it was the asking the young lady and gentleman to buy his rabbits.

“I never could be bold enough,” said the boy, “to talk about such a thing to Miss Herbert and Master Frederick. I should be so ashamed; and most of all, I wanted to beg you, dear, to do it for me.”

Betsey was not what could be called a shy child in general. Whenever it was necessary that she should talk to people, and when she knew that any message she was charged with to deliver was correct and proper, she had no hesitation in speaking even before strangers; but to go on such an errand as her brother now proposed quite startled her, and she sat some little time without making any reply.

“Cannot you do what I ask? will you not go to the Rectory for me, dear?” said John, after anxiously waiting for her to speak. “You have such a nice manner; mother, I know, thinks so; and you could manage the business so well.”

Still Betsey hesitated; but as she liked to oblige, she talked the matter over with John, and it was at last settled that they should both go together at noon the next day, and take the two prettiest rabbits with them.

“We must ask mother’s leave to go,” said John.

“Yes,” replied Betsey; “and I will say what we are come for; but don’t you, when we are at the Rectory, try to hide behind the door, or stand pulling your jacket-sleeve, or keep scraping with your feet, looking so sheepish and silly. You will never get a lady’s place, if you have such tricks.”

“I am sure I did not know I had such strange

ways," said John, "but I must get rid of them. It will be all right when the sergeant has drilled me a little. He makes a wonderful change in very awkward chaps."

"So he does," cried Betsey, "far awkwarder than you; and I dare say," continued she, gaily, "you will soon be as smart a lad as any about the place."

"And get a lady's situation. Eh, dear?"

On inquiry of the obliging grocer, it was found that no objection would be made to John's joining the other lads at drill; and the two rabbits and one other being happily disposed of, nothing remained but to wait the sergeant's return, which was long in taking place.

John thought this delay very tedious, and often lamented it to his sister, till at last she wisely suggested that in the mean time he could try to improve himself.

"You know, John," said she, "you can hold up your head, and turn out your feet, and tread lighter by yourself; you do not want any drill-sergeant to tell you that."

"But I am always forgetting," said John; "you must put me in mind, Betsey."

Betsey replied that she would, and though John was sometimes impatient, and now and then inclined to be angry when his awkward ways were pointed out, he more often laughed at himself, and strove to improve.

At length, one evening, news came of Howard's return, and to John's great satisfaction the following morning, as he was on his way to school, he heard the sound of the fife and drum, and turning into the High Street, he came directly upon the tall sergeant, with gay ribbons streaming from his cap, followed

by four or five country lads, also decked out in ribbons, with their arms swinging to and fro, and their feet shuffling along in the dust.

"I wonder," said John to himself as he looked after these youths, "whether I am quite such a gawky; they do look ugly, to be sure. I want to be like Howard. What a difference between them and him!"

Inquiries were made of the sergeant whether he was willing to undertake the drilling of the town lads; and he consenting, the sum to be paid was agreed upon, and an early day fixed for commencing the exercises.

John found he had sufficient money to pay his share, and he was in high spirits at the near prospect of what he so much wished taking place.

The day before the drill was to begin, some objection arose as to the spot fixed on for the purpose, and another place had to be chosen; and as it was necessary that the boys should know beforehand where they were to assemble on the following morning, they were desired to call before night at the sergeant's residence, to learn where they were to meet.

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## CHAPTER IV.

In the afternoon of the day before the one so eagerly looked forward to by John, a messenger arrived to desire Mrs. Hartley to go to a gentleman's house where she occasionally worked, to take an order for making up some linen that was wanted in haste for one of the young gentlemen who was going abroad. Mrs. Hartley had been for some days rather

ailing, and on that morning had felt almost too unwell to rise; but she had a good spirit, and had said nothing on the subject to her children, trusting that in a short time the feeling would wear off. The house she was desired to repair to was two miles off, along a hot, dusty road, with little shelter from trees or hedges. The weather was sultry, and there was an oppressive feel in the air, such as often precedes a thunder-storm. The poor woman was very glad at the prospect of having a large job of work to do, and where she knew the pay to be good; but she could not help wishing the order had come on any other day. Still she did not hesitate about accepting it, and told the messenger that she would set out immediately.

It was a half-holiday, and John asked his mother if he should go with her, and bring the work back, and Betsey made the same offer; but Mrs. Hartley told the children she should prefer their remaining at home, as the girl might finish hemming some handkerchiefs a young labourer had given her to do; and the boy she wished to mend the leg of the stool her wash-tub stood on. She told them she would make haste back, and to have tea ready against her return, and not to leave the house during her absence.

"I shall be at home, John dear," said she, "time enough for you to go to Howard's to learn where you are to meet in the morning;" and taking the precaution of providing herself with an umbrella, she bid the children good-bye, and set out on her walk.

As soon as Mrs. Hartley was gone, Betsey got the handkerchiefs, and set to work to finish them before her mother's return, as she knew it would give pleasure if they were done. John, with equal dili-



gence, went about his little job of carpentering, which he found more difficult than he expected; but he loved using a hammer and nails, and the task was by no means an unpleasant one. Both children were so eager in their occupations that time slipped away without their being aware how late it was getting. Betsey had risen once from her chair to make up the fire, put the kettle on, and set the tea-things; but when that was done she thought of nothing but finishing the handkerchiefs to please her mother.

"I have done it at last," exclaimed John, coming in from the back-kitchen, looking very hot and red. "I thought the old leg would have mastered me; but I got the better of it at last, and the tub will stand as firm as ever. But look at the clock! I can hardly believe my eyes; why, it is half-past six, and mother not at home."

"She has been detained, I dare say," said Betsey, as she put the last stitches to the handkerchiefs, and folded them up with a well-satisfied feeling.

"I am hungry, and want my supper," said John; "what can it be keeps mother so long?"

"She will soon be here, no doubt," said Betsey, as she mended the fire, which was almost out, while her brother went to the door to look "if he could see mother coming;" but there was no mother to be seen coming smiling along, quickening her pace as she approached the house, glad to be at home again with her two dear children. Seven, eight o'clock struck, and still Mrs. Hartley did not return. John at first was very fidgety, declaring he should be too late to get the desired information from Howard, for the sergeant always went out in the evening; and John said he should not know where he was to go in the morning, and should lose the first day's exercise. He wished his mother had not desired him not to

leave the house while she was away, for then he could have run and made the inquiry, and been back again in a very short time, in less than half an hour, he said; but anxious as he was, no consideration would have tempted him to disobey her order. He divided his time by running to the door to look out, and by talking to his sister of the unlucky hindrance to his wishes that had arisen, and then of the delight it would be to find himself qualified to wait on a lady—on Mrs. William Anderson; no other place, he said, would do for him, not even the first gentleman's in the town or neighbourhood.

"But you forget, John," said his sister, "that Mrs. Anderson has a lad in her service already."

"No, I don't," replied John; "I don't forget that; but my opinion is that Robert Bell will not stop. I don't think," continued he, shaking his head, and looking very wise, "that he is the sort to please such a dear good lady as Mrs. William Anderson."

"You seem," said Betsey, laughing, "to have a very strong liking for that lady. Surely there are many as good as she is."

"No such thing, Betsey," said John, warmly; "all the boys and girls in Downton like her, I know, better than any other lady. How good she is to the poor, and how kind and civil she is to the old people! as civil and pleasant in her manners to them as if they were her equals. And then, how good-natured she is to children! why, it is not more than a month ago, when, as she was walking with Miss Proudfoot in the High Street, a party of boys at play on the pavement caused them to turn out of the way, and Miss Proudfoot spoke angrily, and called them some disagreeable name or other, and Miss Gower, she was Miss Gower then, said so mildly, 'Poor little things,

don't scold them; they are only at their childish play; let them enjoy themselves, they will have care and sorrow enough by-and-by.' And when one of the boys let his hoop fall into the gutter, and splashed her dress, she only gave it a little shake, and smiled and said it did not signify. Oh! she would make an excellent mistress, that she would."

But though for an hour or two the children contrived to while away the tedious time of waiting, they began at last to grow uneasy at their mother's long absence; and this feeling increased greatly when night set in, and rain began to fall heavily. At first they hoped it was only a summer shower, and would soon pass off; but presently bright gleams of lightning flashed among the clouds, glanced over the tops of the houses, and danced along the pavement, making the street at times as light as day. The children stood at the window, watching and talking of their mother, and imagining first one thing, and then another, that might have delayed her return home, and hoping that she had not set out and been overtaken by the storm. Betsey wondered if such lightning was dangerous, and John said it was sheet lightning, and as such he believed was not dangerous; but hardly had he spoken when the heavens seemed to open, and a stream of forked lightning ran zigzag from one end of the sky to the other, followed up quick by a crashing peal of thunder; and then another and another flash succeeded, each accompanied by a terrific roll of thunder, long and loud, like volleys of cannon fired overhead, while the rain poured down in torrents.

Betsey was frightened, and began to cry, exclaiming from time to time, "Oh, poor mother, where are you? Are you out in this storm, or are you safe under shelter?"

John was not without fear, for it was in truth an awful night; still he did all he could to comfort his sister. He told her not to cry, and to hope for the best; but Betsey was too much overcome to pay much heed to what was said.

Suddenly he called out, "Hush! leave off crying; I cannot hear. Listen, there is some one coming down the street; it is mother! I know her step." And he flew to the house-door, and there outside was indeed his poor mother, drenched to the skin, and looking white and ill.

"Oh! mother," exclaimed he, "to think of your being out in such a night."

Betsey was by their side in an instant, and she and her brother drew their mother in and placed her on a chair, for she seemed to be on the point of falling. John flew for a bundle of sticks to throw on the fire, and Betsey poured out a cup of hot tea, and assisted her mother to drink it. Meanwhile the wet was streaming off Mrs. Hartley's clothes, and as soon as she was sufficiently revived to do so, she indicated that she had better go to bed. She appeared too ill to speak more than a word or two, and the children were very much alarmed at the state she was in.

With considerable difficulty the poor woman was got to bed. John filled a bottle of hot water to put to her feet, and Betsey gave her more tea, and the shivering somewhat subsided, and at last Mrs. Hartley was able to speak a few words to her anxious children. She could not, indeed, fully inform them that her delay had been caused by the sudden indisposition of one of the family where she had gone for work, and that she had stayed to assist; and that when her services were no longer needed, she had hastened off, *hoping* to reach her home before the

rain came on, but that feeling very unwell she had been obliged to rest by the way; that the high wind had broken her umbrella, and that she had been exposed to the pelting of the storm. All this, John and Betsey learned afterwards; but their mother roused herself sufficiently to allay their fears by assuring them that she was getting to feel "quite comfortable," and that after a good night's rest she should rise up quite well the next morning.

The alarm John had felt about his mother had put out of his head all thoughts of the next day's drill, and his anxiety to know where it was to take place; but as soon as his fears were calmed, and he had lain quietly down in his bed, his mind reverted to the interesting subject, and he determined that he would rise very early in the morning, and leave the house without disturbing any one, and go and find out all he wanted to know. This, however, he was not fated to do, for a grievous sorrow was coming upon him. His mother was seized with a dangerous illness, and for many weeks it was doubtful if she would recover. She had caught a violent cold the night of the storm, which, added to her previous illness, brought on fever and delirium, and left her at last reduced to almost childish weakness.

Betsey had been alarmed on the first night by her mother's restlessness, and by her appearing in a burning fever, and not being conscious of what was said to her. The girl ran to call her brother, and they consulted together what should be done, and they agreed that John should go for a doctor, who, as soon as he saw Mrs. Hartley, and heard of the circumstances that preceded her attack, pronounced her to be in a dangerous state, and requiring the greatest care and attention.

The news of Mrs. Hartley's illness soon spread in

the humble neighbourhood where she lived, and first one kind person and then another came and gave what assistance was in their power to the poor children, who were in deep affliction.

John and Betsey had seen a good deal of illness during the lifetime of their father, and had often assisted in preparing his sustenance, and in waiting on him; and they now proved themselves to be very handy and useful, so much so, indeed, that, with the neighbourly assistance they received, it was not necessary to incur the heavy expense of hiring a nurse. The children sat up at night by turns with their sick mother; and when it was necessary that they should take some needful repose, they first one and then the other lay down on a little mattress in a corner of the room, so that they were within call of each other in case of being wanted.

The grief and anxiety of these two poor children were very great. They loved their mother with true affection, and as day after day passed, and she got no better, and the doctor pronounced that her recovery was very doubtful, they bitterly lamented the sad prospect before them of losing such a kind and tender parent, and reflected how desolate their state would be without her. They were unwearied in their attention, watching by her side, and doing everything in their power to alleviate her sufferings. Sometimes the neighbours would tell first John, and then Betsey, to leave the sick-room for a time, either to take a little outdoor exercise, or go for a walk to make a change; but they both always said no, declaring that they could not bear to be away from mother; they "could not be happy to leave her for a moment, except when they were obliged to go for medicine, or to fetch in anything that was wanted."

It was a fortunate circumstance that early in life Mrs. Hartley had acquired the habit of laying by a little money; for her savings were often advantageous, as in the case of her sick husband, whom she was able to supply with many little comforts which could not otherwise have been obtained. And when the poor man's death left her at liberty to pursue her work more uninterruptedly, she resumed her good plan of laying by a portion of her earnings, which now were most serviceable, as no other money was coming in for necessities. Betsey, who, as chief housekeeper, had the management of this little store, was as careful as possible of it; but still the expenses attendant upon illness, and food for herself and her brother, diminished it so much as to cause her great alarm.

John and she often consulted together as to what could be done. As to lessening anything that was for their mother's use or comfort, it was not to be thought of for a moment; but they settled that they could make a saving as regarded themselves, and they determined to eat no more bread, and to live entirely upon the produce of their little garden. Potatoes, they said, were excellent food for breakfast and supper, and then there were greens for dinner, and balm to make tea of. All that they wanted was to be had in the garden, and they added, that if they were to be set down to a feast, they should have no appetite for it while their mother was so ill.

But with all the care and good management, such as the children were capable of, the money became so reduced that at last only a few shillings remained. Betsey was sitting one afternoon in the lower room, counting over the small *hoard*, and reckoning how much must go for such and such an article, when her

brother, who had been taking his turn of watching by his mother's bedside, came down saying that she "was pining after a little fruit." He said that she had just whispered "currants," "garden," as she had done several times before, and added that he had turned the bushes over and over again that very morning, and that there was not a berry left.

"What can be done?" exclaimed the boy; "I must get her a little fruit somehow or other. What can you spare me, Betsey?"

"I would give all that is here," replied Betsey, pointing to the small money-box, "to procure anything poor dear mother has a fancy for; but then, what could we do for beef to make her broth, and for other little things necessary for her? You know the doctor says she must have what is nourishing."

"I know," said John, "and it grieves my heart to have her longing for what I cannot get her. Count again, Betsey, and see if you could not spare twopence. I would then go to Mr. Green's garden, and see if he would let me have a few currants. He has some covered up with nets, I know, for I saw them when I passed by the other day."

"You can try," said Betsey, "currants are so refreshing where there is a fever. I am afraid, though, you will not get many for this," continued she, as she handed her brother the twopence; "fruit is so scarce and dear this season."

"And so is everything, I think," said John. "I am sure I do not know what will become of us."

"We will put our trust in God," said Betsey; "you know we have a Father in heaven, who never forgets His children who believe in His power and goodness. He will never forsake mother, I am sure; and now she is getting a little better we will



not be cast down. Shall we pray together before you go out, John? Prayer strengthens us to bear all evils."

"Yes," replied John; "let us pray, for God can help us when we can do nothing for ourselves."

And he and his sister did as they were in the habit of doing when their hearts were full. They knelt and prayed to God for His dear Son's sake to take compassion on them and guide them in the right way, and raise their beloved mother from her bed of sickness.

With a heart somewhat lightened of its burden, the boy set off on his errand, while Betsey warmed a little broth, and carrying it up-stairs, carefully fed her mother with a spoon, for Mrs. Hartley was too weak to take the basin in her own hands. The girl then got her work, while the sick woman fell into a sleep more quiet and gentle than any she had enjoyed since her illness.

In much less time than Betsey thought it possible to be back, her brother returned. She heard him coming up stairs, and hastened forward to warn him that their mother slept. "Have you got the currants?" she asked in a whisper.

John replied that he had, and that Mr. Green had told him he might have some more when he liked to go for them. "He was very kind," added the boy, "when he heard how ill poor mother is."

"Ah!" said Betsey, with a long-drawn sigh; "but where is the money to come from?"

John laughed.

"Hush!" said Betsey, "you will wake mother. What can you mean by looking so merry? I have not seen you smile this many a day."

John looked still more pleased, and beckoning his

sister, asked her to follow him down to the room below.

"Well, what is it?" said she.

"What is it?" repeated the boy, and opening his hand he held some silver towards her. "There," said he, "I could not have thought I could have been so stupid as to forget this—it is my rabbit money. I remembered it as I was going along to Green's, and I ran back as fast as I could to make sure it was safe; and safe enough it was, wrapped up in paper, and lying in the corner of the cupboard. Is it not joyful? I can now get mother fruit when she wishes for it."

Betsey entered fully into her brother's feeling of pleasure, and rejoiced at the prospect of their mother having fruit, which appeared to be almost a necessary in her feverish state.

The children then agreed what a happiness it was that the money had not been spent in paying Howard. The mention of the sergeant's name awakened recollections in their minds which in the distress they had lately undergone had been quite forgotten. They talked a little of the great wish John had felt to live as servant boy with Mrs. William Anderson, and his desire to be fitted for the place by being drilled like a recruit.

"I think nothing about all that now," said John; "but should dear mother recover, as the doctor seems now to hope she will, I shall again be wanting to fit myself for service." Then, after a pause, he looked anxiously at his sister and said, "I suppose I am awkwarder than ever."

"No, that you are not," cried Betsey; "since you have helped so much in a sick-room, you are grown as gentle as a girl, and no one could tread

lighter than you do when you are going about the house, fearing lest you should disturb mother."

John was well pleased at this commendation of Betsey's. In truth, he did somewhat merit approbation; for during the long illness of Mrs. Hartley he had done his very best to be useful, giving up all his own pleasure, and helping his sister with a readiness and willingness that many boys would not have felt called upon to exert.

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## CHAPTER V.

AFTER many weeks of painful doubt and anxiety, it pleased God that Mrs. Hartley's disorder should take a favourable turn, and she began slowly to regain health and strength.

Long before her recovery, indeed while she was still in a very reduced and suffering state, all the small savings and John's rabbit-money were spent. When Betsey sorrowfully told John that they were now come to their last sixpence, and that before night even that would be gone in unavoidable expenses, they both remained for some time silent, each endeavouring to think what could be done in such a trying situation.

"I cannot think of anything," at last said Betsey; "but there is one thing certain, and that is, we must not tell mother how badly we are off."

"No," replied John; "it would fret her so, that she would be worse again."

"Poor mother," continued Betsey, "when she first began to take notice, mentioned the money we have been using, and said it was lucky she had

drawn it out of the savings bank just before her illness."

"She drew it out," said John, "to make some purchases of winter clothing, which at the time was to be had cheap. She thinks the money is still going on, does she not, Betsey?"

"Yes, I have taken care that she should not be made uneasy by learning how nearly it is coming to an end. But I must go now, she will be wanting me, and when you have chopped some wood for the fire you can come up-stairs and read a chapter. Mother says she is able to listen to a little of the Bible now, and it comforts her. I will mend your jacket while you read;" and Betsey hastened away. But John did not immediately go after the firewood. He remained with his arms resting on the window-sill, looking out into the garden, continuing to turn over in his mind what it might be possible to do to procure a little money in their great need.

While thus standing, one of his rabbits which had got loose ran across a bed of cabbages. John started at the sight like one struck with a sudden thought "I can sell my rabbits," cried he joyfully to himself. "I will sell them hutch and all;" and he hastened out to capture and replace the truant rabbit, which had made its escape through a hole in its place of confinement, which hole it was necessary immediately to repair. This being done, he was eager to tell his sister of his plan, and to consult with her as to who would be likely to make the desired purchase. He called gently to her to come down, but she could not at the minute leave her mother; and he, too much excited and too impatient to wait quietly without in some way acting, resolved to set about making his wishes known directly. Accord-

ingly he got a piece of paper and pen and ink, and wrote in a large legible hand :

"Some fine rabbits and a rabbit-hutch to be sold. Inquire within."

This notice he placed in the front window of the house, hoping that it might attract the attention of some passer-by, who would like to gain possession of what he himself considered a great treasure.

Nothing could have answered better. It was market-day at Downton, and in less than an hour the notice caught the eye of a higgler who chanced to be passing through the lane. He had been commissioned by a young customer to procure him some very pretty rabbits, and thinking that he might probably meet here with what he wanted, entered the house and asked to see John's. The rabbits were approved of. John, from having once before disposed of some, knew what he ought to ask, and the buyer, being an honest man, did not dispute the price demanded, and he carried off, not only the rabbits, but their house, much to John's delight.

Betsey could hardly believe the good news till her brother actually placed the money in her hand.

Long before Mrs. Hartley had sufficient strength to enter upon the subject, she had many an anxious thought respecting the expense her illness must have occasioned ; and wondered if the little store of money she had withdrawn from the savings bank would hold out till she was again able to work for the maintenance of her children and herself. She was unconscious of the time she had been laid up, yet she knew it must be a long while ; and when Betsey told her how many weeks it was, and that there was still a little money in the house to go on with, she seemed greatly relieved in her mind. Nothing more was said on the subject for a few days,

but with increasing strength Mrs. Hartley's good judgment and quick perception of what was right, returned, and she would not rest satisfied till she was correctly informed of how much money had been expended, and how much still remained. Above all, she anxiously inquired if any debt had been incurred except that to the doctor.

John, by his mother's desire, kept a book in which he always entered the little expenses of the family ; for she liked at the end of the week to look over and see for what things the money had gone ; and she also wished to practise her son in keeping accounts, and in forming regular habits. In this book John had continued to set down all the money he and his sister had laid out since they had the management of it, except one or two days when his mother was at the worst of her illness, and his distress was too great to think of anything but her.

This book was now brought forward for Mrs. Hartley to examine, and consequently the history of the rabbits, and the sacrifice John had made of his own pleasures and wishes, all came out. He did not mean to have told his mother anything about what he had done for her till she was well, but the questions she asked occasioned her to hear all that had taken place during her illness. Her son's kindness moved her very much, and this, together with the thought of all the tender care and love both her children had shown, almost overpowered her, and it was not till she had relieved herself by a burst of tears that she could speak to them and say how much she thanked and blessed them for their attendance on her, without which she was perfectly sensible she should never have recovered. In this last opinion she was confirmed by the doctor who attended her, and by some of her neighbours, who

spoke warmly in praise of the conduct of both John and Betsey during the long time of their mother's illness.

Mrs. Hartley greatly objected to the having recourse to parish assistance, not from any feeling of foolish pride, but because she always considered that while there was a possibility of persons maintaining themselves, they had no right to be a burden on their country. It was necessary that something should be done, and that very shortly, in order to procure a little money for food. As to the small luxuries her children had hitherto supplied her with, Mrs. Hartley positively refused any longer to partake of, and she insisted that she should very soon be capable of undertaking a job of needlework. The poor woman's will was greater than her powers, for two or three times on making the attempt to sit up and employ herself, she fainted, and had to be placed again on her bed.

"I must have patience," said she at last; "I can do no good by striving to hurry on my recovery. God has been most merciful to me in preserving my life, and no doubt in His good time I shall be able to go about my customary duties and employments." Meanwhile, what was to be done? The mother and the children talked the matter over, and it was agreed that John should try, as it was now the busy time of harvest, and get some farmer to give him a little employment, if it was only for a few weeks. There was a fear that the boy would be too late in his application, for the corn was nearly all cut, and there had been a great influx of labourers from different parts of the country. However, it was settled that the boy should try, not that he could be engaged as a reaper, that was not for a moment to be thought

of, but it was hoped that he might be employed in some way or other about a farm.

Two or three days were spent by John in fruitless inquiries, and he returned home weary and dispirited at night, saying nobody wanted a boy like him; he was too young, some said, for fieldwork, or too old to tend sheep, or scare crows; "but the real thing, I think," said he, "is that every farmer has got as many people to work just now as he wants."

At length, a neighbour who worked for a large landholder, hearing of John's wish for employment, got him "taken on" for a few weeks by Mr. Beane, who held the Manor Farm about four miles from Downton. The wages the boy was to receive were very small; still that little was of great value, for it gave support for a time to his mother and sister, while he himself lived free of expense.

As John was hired to supply the place of a boy who had gone home ill, he was wanted immediately, and he lost no time in setting out. The parting was a painful one, for the boy had been so long in close attendance on his mother that he fancied she could not do well without him, and she on her part would greatly miss his kind and unwearied attention. Betsey, too, John thought, would often want his assistance; and she, poor girl, grieved at the necessity which took her brother away while their mother was still so far from recovered.

"God bless you, my dear boy," said Mrs. Hartley, as John came to give her his farewell kiss; "may He please to keep you under His gracious protection and good guidance! You are going among strangers, some of whom may be without religion, but do not you be drawn aside from the right path. Never fail to say your prayers; strive to serve your



master well, and be ever ready to help any one who may want your assistance."

"I will, mother," said John, struggling hard to suppress his tears: "I will attend to all you say; but I am so sorry to leave you."

"We shall not be very far apart, my dear," said Mrs. Hartley, striving for composure and to speak cheerfully. "Cheer up, and think how fortunate it is for me, and for us all, that you can earn a little money at a time we are in such great need; and who knows but that going to Mr. Beane's may lead to something still more advantageous? And John, dear, though to be a farm servant is not at all what you wish, take the opportunity of learning all you can. To acquire what is useful is always an advantage, and you cannot tell but some day or other such knowledge may turn out to be of use."

Betsey placed the little bundle of his things which she had tied up in her brother's hands, and, following him down stairs, stood with the tears gathering in her eyes looking after him as he strode up the street.

He had not gone many paces before he turned back, and, seizing his sister's hand, said, "Betsey, take care of mother."

"I will," said Betsey, "you may depend on that."

"Yes, I know you will," said John, "you always have; but," and his voice faltered, "it is so hard to go away and leave her while she is still so ill."

## CHAPTER VI.

EARLY hours were kept at the Manor Farm, and it was just bedtime when John arrived, so that he did not enter upon any of his new duties that night. His sleeping apartment was a little loft over one of the outbuildings; it had been occupied by his predecessor, and was not uncomfortable, but the newness of his situation, and thoughts of those he had left at home, kept him waking a long time; but at last when sleep came it was profound, and if his room had not been close to the poultry-yard, there is no saying how long he might have lain. As it was, the loud cackling of geese and hens, and the gobbling of turkeys, made him start from his bed, fearing he had overslept himself, and should thus make a bad beginning at his place. He hastened to unfasten the shutter which covered the opening which served as a window to let in the light, and there just opposite he beheld the glorious spectacle of the rising sun. He hoped he was not so very late, and looked about for materials with which to wash himself, but these were not to be found; so he put on his clothes and knelt down and said his prayers, when, after standing a few moments looking out at the opening in the loft, thinking of his mother, and wondering how she was that morning, he made his way down a ladder and out into the farm-yard.

Mr. Beane was there talking to his head man, and while John was considering whether he could not find his way to a pump, in order to obtain some sort of a bath, or whether, as his master was before him, he ought not to ask what he should do, a drove of pigs, which had broken from their place of con-

finement, rushed across the yard, grunting and squeaking, and making their way to the garden or any other place they fancied.

"What are you about there, stupid?" cried Mr. Beane, turning suddenly round on John, "standing still there staring; don't you see that the pigs have got loose, and are running into all sorts of mischief?"

John quickly caught what was meant, and he dashed after the pigs, collecting them right and left, and drove them back to the place from whence they had come.

"They will be out again, sir," said John, "if the paling is not mended. Shall I do it?"

"Somebody ought," said Mr. Beane, who had resumed his conversation with his bailiff, and seemed to have forgotten all about the pigs.

John did not wait for any further answer, but went and got a hammer and nails out of a tool-box he had observed the night before standing under the kitchen dresser, and soon made fast some loose paling which, having been pushed aside by the pigs, enabled them to break out.

He was returning to the house to replace the hammer, when a stout, middle-aged woman who managed the dairy made her appearance in the doorway, and setting her arms akimbo, called out, "What are you after, you boy, that you are not fetching up the cows? it is milking time and past."

John advanced to inquire where he should find the cows; but the woman either did not or would not hear, for turning short round she disappeared into the house. That the cows were somewhere about the farm, John did not doubt, so he set himself to look for them. Crossing the farm-yard he went out, and

seeing a low pollard tree in a hedge just opposite, he climbed up it to take a look round, and there in a meadow not very far off he saw several cows feeding and some of them standing near a gate, apparently waiting to be fetched up. Feeling sure he was right, he made his way to them, and set about driving them up to the house. But he had not got above half way, when observing that there were some young heifers among the cows, it struck him that he should do wrong in bringing them from their pasture; and he turned and drove them back, thus causing a delay that he feared would draw down displeasure on him. However, nothing was said, and he had lodged his charge in the cow-house just as the dairy-woman was coming forth with her stool and milking-pails. He felt relieved, and leaned back against some railing for a moment or two to consider if he ought to follow, or what his next duty might chance to be, when a man passing by said, "You will be late, I am thinking, with the master's pony; there is to give him a rub down when you have fetched him up, and then to saddle and bridle him. Master will be here very shortly, and he will not like to be kept waiting."

"Well," thought John, "I may find out as I can what my employments are to be, nobody takes the trouble of instructing me."

Luckily there was no difficulty as to knowing where the pony was to be found, for John had observed him grazing in one of the fields through which he had passed when he went to fetch up the cows; so proceeding there, and setting the gate open, he hastened to drive the pony before him in the same way. But the pony was in no humour to be caught, and resisted all efforts to entrap him. Sometimes he would suffer John to approach quite near, and the

boy thought he should get the little animal to go the right way; when, shaking his head and kicking up his heels, he would start off again and gallop in an opposite direction. John followed, chasing him round and round the field, till at last, quite exhausted, he gave up the task as hopeless, and returned to the farm-yard to report his ill success. He looked about for the man who had sent him on his fruitless errand, and saw him standing outside the stable-door.

"I cannot catch the pony," cried John; "he will not let me come near him."

"What, did you think you should catch that skittish thing without the sieve?" said the man; and going into the stable he returned with some corn laid in a sieve, which he handed to John, who joyfully received it, and was hastening back to the field when the man called after him, "Going without the halter, are you? You are a bright one to send after master's pony;" and taking the halter from the peg where it hung, he threw it after the boy. Thus armed, John repaired again to the field, where, notwithstanding the man's opinion of him, he went sensibly to work, for instead of going up at once to the "skittish thing," he stood still at some little distance off, and called and held the sieve forward, when, having caught the pony's attention, and induced it to advance in the hope of obtaining a treat of corn, he kept gently withdrawing himself till he had beguiled the little animal through the field-gate, which he shut, then setting down the sieve for the contents to be eaten, he put on the halter without any difficulty. The pony was by no means vicious, and when arrived at the stable, he stood quiet while the boy with a wisp of straw strove hard to give a polish to his rough coat. John kept the longer at

this operation in the hope that the man who had sent him after the pony, or some one else, would appear, who would show him how to put on the saddle and bridle, a thing he had never done himself, or even seen done. But no one came, and he feared every moment that the master would call for his pony, and be angry not to find it ready. John thought it a piece of great good luck that just at that time a gentleman should ride into the farm-yard, and dismounting, fasten his horse outside the house-door, and go in to speak to Mr. Beane. Here was the very thing he wanted; he had only to copy what he saw, and fetching out a saddle and bridle, he placed them on the pony in as proper a manner as if he had been used to horses all his life. He had just accomplished this feat, and led the pony up to Mr. Beane, who called for it, when the dairy-woman came forth from the cow-house with her last pail of milk, and passing near John, said something which, as he did not catch, he asked her to repeat; instead of doing which she jerked her head round and nodded towards the cow-house, by which sign John, being tolerably quick of comprehension, understood that he was to conduct the cows back to the field from whence he had brought them.

On his return he was hailed to breakfast by this same person, who it would be thought expected John to have an intuitive perception of all he had to do, for she called out, "Why do you not come and get your breakfast? you had better be quick about it, or I shall clear all away."

John, whose appetite was sharpened by exercise and morning air, lost no time in obeying the summons, and was soon seated in the farmer's comfortable kitchen with a mess of milk porridge and a slice of bread before him. Sufficient time too was afforded

him in which to eat it, and he rose up much refreshed, with a willing mind to do anything that was required of him. He did not wait long before a variety of little offices were given him to perform. He had the clothes-line to hang out in the orchard; a box of knives and forks were set down before him to clean; and then some dirty boots and shoes were pointed out to his notice; barley was to be fetched to feed the poultry; and lastly, beans and potatoes had to be carried to the pigs that were being fatted for the winter stock of bacon. As John was returning from this last occupation, one of the labourers put two eggs into his hand, saying, "I knew I should find out the speckled hen's nest before long, and so I have; those are fine eggs, take them in for the mistress, and mind she has them."

John took the eggs and carried them into the kitchen, asking, as he considered himself bound to do, where the mistress was, as he had some new-laid eggs to give her.

"Where is the mistress, are you asking, boy?" said the dairy-woman, whose name was Margery. "Why, don't you know she is ill in bed?" Then turning to a girl, a rough helper in the kitchen-work, she said, "You need not go, Sally, the boy shall—I had forgotten him. Nurse says mistress ought to have had her medicine two hours ago." Then handing a small basket to John, she bid him set off as fast as he could for "the stuff."

"Where am I to go, please?" said John.

"Why, to the doctor's, to be sure, where else would you go?" and Margery turned off to stir a pot on the fire, which sent forth a most savoury smell.

The boy still standing in the same place, the girl, who knew him to be a stranger, concluded he did

not know where he was to go, and taking compassion on his puzzled look, she told him that he must go to Doctor Heal's, who lived at Ringwood.

John would have liked to ask where Ringwood was, but Margery turning sharp round upon him with "Come, be off," he thought he would take the chance of finding the place himself, or of getting some more obliging person to direct him. He crossed the farm-yard slowly, but every one was now in the fields, and remembering that he had seen a directing-post not very far off the evening he came, he proceeded to it, and to his great satisfaction he saw written on one of the hands, "To Ringwood, one mile and a quarter."

Ringwood was a small village, and the road that led to it was very quiet and retired, and John as he went thought much of his sick mother, and felt glad he was in the way to earn a little money for her, and he hoped that he might give sufficient satisfaction in his place to be allowed to remain. His master he had seen little of, but Margery, who appeared to act as mistress, seemed very cross and hard to please.

Dr. Heal was not at home, and his assistant told John he must wait for the medicine; this the boy decidedly thought he ought to do, as he had heard that Mrs. Beane had already been much too long without it. But he had a tedious time to wait, for the doctor had been detained by a patient who was very ill. Then when he did return, the medicines took a long while preparing, so that it was late before John got back, though he walked as fast as he could, for he felt much for a sick person. No one was in the kitchen, and though he called and looked about for Margery, and even called out "nurse," no one came to take the medicine from him. After



standing some little time irresolute what to do, he looked at the clock, and seeing it was the hour when he knew the cows ought to be fetched up again for the milking, he set off after them.

He was very hungry, and before starting he cast a somewhat eager look round the kitchen to see if there were any signs of a dinner left for him; but there was nothing of the kind; everything was cleared away, the plates were washed and put back in their places, the kitchen was clean swept, the fire was almost out, and even the savoury smell had departed. John said to himself, "They leave me to find out my work without telling, perhaps I might find my dinner in the same way;" and he looked across at the pantry, and thought how easily he could help himself; but he did not think this would be right, therefore, trying to forget his hunger, he went to his work.

As he was following the cows across the last meadow, a man who was at plough in an adjoining field, popped his head over the hedge and called out, "Halloa, you boy there, when you have driven up the cows, come here and mind the leader; master wants Robert to go and load, and I want to finish this piece of headland to-day, I can't have a team to-morrow."

As John concluded he was to do all that everybody told him, and remembering his mother's words to be obliging to all, as soon as he had lodged the cows in their shed, repaired to the field and "minded the leader," or, in other words, guided the first horse of the team while the man held the plough. Up and down many a time did the boy pace wearily along the furrows of the field, now and then wishing, it must be owned, that he had even the few potatoes or piece of cabbage on which he and his sister had

lately made their dinner. At last the piece of land was finished, the labourer detached his horses from the plough and took them home, and as he did not give John any further orders, the boy hastened to the kitchen to find out if the sick mistress had yet got her medicine. He found it was removed from the place where he had left it, so he hoped she had; but he did not escape a sharp reprimand from Margery for the length of time he was gone. John endeavoured to make her hear that he was not indeed to blame, and that he had been obliged to wait for the doctor's return; but she would not listen. "Don't tell me," said she; "like all the boys when they are sent on an errand, always stopping, blackberry-hunting, or birds'-nesting, or loitering along, instead of making haste. You have lost your dinner by your idleness, and serves you right."

John could have said the blackberries were not yet ripe, and that this was not the season for birds'-nesting; but he was silent, and was turning sorrowfully away at being thus unjustly accused, and thinking how different it was when he explained anything to his dear mother, when Margery called him to stop, and going into the pantry returned with a bowl full of the savoury mess, the flavour of which John had inhaled in an earlier part of the day.

"There's your dinner for you," said she, setting it down on the table, "though it is more than you deserve."

John ate his food with great relish, and reflected that the unjust blame he had incurred was one of the trials which he knew he, in common with all mankind, must bear, and he called to mind words which had been addressed by the clergyman to the boys of his school, namely, "That happy was he

who, though under condemnation, was acquitted of evil by his conscience."

"And this is not such a great trial after all," said John to himself, as, with a well-satisfied appetite, he scooped up the last spoonful of his mess; "and, perhaps, *she* will find out before I go that mother has brought me up to speak the truth."

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## CHAPTER VII.

JOHN was so fully employed the whole of the day that he could not find a moment's time to get a bath. He resolved, therefore, to make himself amends the following morning, for, seeing an old earthen basin standing by one of the outhouses, he took possession of it, and filling it full of water carried it up into the loft where he slept. By the time night came he was very tired, and glad to go to bed; but he did not allow himself to seek repose till he had not only said his prayers, but had done as his mother had taught him—thought over all he had done in the day, and examined himself to see if his conduct had been right in the sight of the Almighty.

Had he done his duty to his master? had he been active and diligent? "not slothful in business." Had he been ready to help and oblige his fellow-labourers? Had he been gentle and patient, though others might not have been so to him? What had he done for the Saviour, who had done so much for him?

These questions he asked himself, and endeavoured truly to answer, and he made a good resolution for his future conduct. Especially he deter-

mined not to feel anger towards Margery, and to answer her civilly, however cross she might be.

It was very well he had done so, for early the next day, on missing the basin John had taken away, she was quite out of temper at not finding it in its place, as she wanted it in a hurry to mix some food for some chickens she was fattening. She angrily asked every one if they had moved it, but no one could tell anything about it, till John, returning from the fields with the cows, hearing the inquiry, said it was he who had taken the basin away, and for what purpose, adding he did not know it was wanted, but that he would run and fetch it directly.

"Do you touch it again if you dare," said the angry dairy-woman, as John brought forward the old basin; "a pretty thing it is to keep me waiting and hunting about in this manner, when I have so much to do, I do not know which way to turn, and all because a boy such as you must have washing things in his bedroom like a gentleman. There is the pump for you, and the round towel behind the back kitchen door, and if you don't like that, you may do without."

John, acting upon his resolution not to resent Margery's unpleasant behaviour, said he was sorry he had put her to inconvenience, but he had thought it was an old basin set out of the way because it was of no use. This apology produced no answer; indeed, the boy was doubtful if it was heard, for Margery was beating up her barley-meal with such energy that the rattle of the spoon and basin was enough to drown the sound of his voice. John would have preferred having what he said listened to; but, as he had satisfied his own conscience, he walked away to fulfil some of his numerous duties.

Late in the evening of this same day, just before

bed-time, Sally, the scrubbing-girl before mentioned, called John privately into the back-kitchen, of which she seemed the peculiar mistress, as she was always busy there, and seldom to be seen anywhere else.

"Hush !" cried she, as John approached, "don't let Margery hear;" then lowering her voice almost to a whisper, she said, "you are a tidy boy. I see your mother has brought you up to have neat ways, just as mine did me. I am a poor orphan now, but I like to keep to the clean habits she taught me, and I am willing to help others to do the same. Here is an old pan I found behind a heap of rubbish, and you may take it for your use."

John thanked the girl, and then asked if Margery always lived at the farm.

"Yes, now she does," replied Sally; "you see, she is a sort of relation of the master's, and she looks after everything, and will not allow of any waste, or any wrong goings-on, if she can help it. The last boy broke a basin, and that is the reason she would not let you have one."

"She seems to be quite mistress," said John.

"Yes, that she is," said Sally, "and a precious sharp one too, and you and I shall get a good scolding if she finds us two here talking; she will think we are idling our time, so take your pan and be off with you."

John's occupations did not vary much; every succeeding day he did pretty much what he had done the day before. Sometimes he was employed rather differently; for he now and then carried beer to the men in the harvest-fields, sometimes he helped the man who thatched the stacks of corn, and from time to time he worked in the garden. At the end of the week he received his wages, and on Sunday

after dinner, having been to church in the morning, he asked and obtained "leave to carry his money home to his mother." Nothing in the boy's after life ever surpassed the delight of that return to his home, the first time after leaving it, and when he brought with him for his mother money of his own earning.

Mrs. Hartley was sitting up dressed in her Sunday clothes, and feeling better than she had done since her illness, when her boy arrived. It was a joyful meeting for all three—the mother, the brother, and the sister. John thought the invalid improved in appearance, but he made many anxious inquiries concerning her; and when he went down-stairs with his sister to fill the kettle and bring up the tea-things, he asked her if she thought their mother was really and truly recovering. Betsey assured him that there did not now appear the least doubt of her being again quite well, and not very long either before she was so.

"Did mother miss me when I was gone?" said John.

"Ay, that she did," replied his sister; "we used to talk of nothing but you of an evening when I sat at work by her side. And I missed you too, John."

"It is so nice to be remembered when one is away," said John; "and I am sure I did nothing but think of mother and you all the day long."

There was much to tell of what John did at the farm. Mrs. Hartley listened with great interest, and Betsey was highly amused with all his histories, and she laughed right out as her brother told of his attempt to catch the "skittish" pony. But she was very indignant at Margery's doubting his word when he said he had not stopped by the way the day he went to the doctor.

"Mother," exclaimed she, "think of her doubting John's word—he who, as you have often said, never told a lie since he was born."

"But I did not get angry with her," said John.

"That is right, my dear," said his mother; "even if we were not commanded by God's holy word to bear and forbear, we should often find it to our worldly advantage to check our angry speech, and as much as possible return mild and obliging answers."

John lingered to the last moment by the side of his mother, and when the time came that he really must go, or else incur the displeasure of his master at being out too late, Mrs. Hartley, wishing to give as much happiness as she could to both her children, gave Betsey leave to accompany her brother part of his way back to the farm.

The children chatted pleasantly together as they walked along, first talking of their mother, and then of John's new occupations at his place.

"I wish to do my duty, Betsey," said he, "but it is bad schooling for a gentleman's situation. They are so rough at the farm! you can't think how rough."

"But you need not be rough," said Betsey, "because others are. Mother and I were talking about it, and I said I was afraid you would never learn good manners now."

"And what did mother say?" eagerly inquired the boy.

"Mother said," replied his sister, "and she made me laugh, did I think because a boy had to feed pigs he need eat like a pig?"

"That is true," said John; "but I have no time to myself."

"And you do not want time to yourself," said

sey; "mother says what there is to do need not one awkwardly. Now, when a boy goes to fetch cows, she says, he need not go lounging along, leaning himself from side to side, just as though he were one of them. He can walk upright, and——"

"I will march like Howard," cried John, gaily interrupting his sister. "I will fancy I am the sergeant, and the cows the recruits."

"Do," said Betsey; "and now I must say good-

I must not go any farther, for fear mother would want me."

"Good-bye, Betsey," said John; "I have had a pleasant holiday, and am so thankful mother is home."

"You will come again next Sunday?" said Betsey, saying for a few more parting words.

"I hope so," replied John; and with this prospect in view, the brother and sister hastened on their different ways to fulfil the little duties which were appointed them.

The indulgence of taking home his week's wages on Sunday afternoon was granted to John. Mr. B was very well satisfied with the boy himself, and he heard no complaints of him from his labourers. All the men about the farm appeared to John, and even Margery's manners softened a little towards him.

John had been about a month at the farm, when one morning, going into the cow-house with the intention of taking the animals back to their pasture, and finding that the milking was not over, and that Margery, instead of her usual active ways, was now leaning her head against the shed, and looking pale and faint.

John inquired kindly if she was ill, and whether she could do anything for her.



"You must go and fetch Robert," replied she, "to finish the milking, I cannot; and I am not sure he can. William is gone to Ringwood, and will not be back this hour."

"I can milk, if you will let me do it," said John.

"You," exclaimed Margery; "you are talking nonsense."

"No," replied the boy, "I can milk quite well. William taught me, that I might help him the days you were from home." And taking the stool and the pail, he set to work, and acquitted himself no less to the dairy-woman's surprise than satisfaction.

"There is the butter not made," exclaimed she, as John brought in the last pailful of milk, "and this is market-day, and I shall lose the sale of it."

"I can turn the churn," said John, "and put the cream in too, if you will come into the dairy and show me what I am to take."

"It is not half skimmed," said Margery, mournfully.

"There is not much difficulty about that," said John; "I will do it in no time." And running into the dairy, he had the skimming-dish in his hand, and was taking off some of the fine rich cream, before Margery could well get up to him.

Whether it was that John's activity roused her, or that she got better, Margery was able to assist in filling the churn, and then seeing that the boy turned it in a proper, steady manner, she desired him to "keep on," and that she would "go and get herself a cup of tea, and then *perhaps* she should be able to make up the butter."

The tea produced the desired effect, and with

John's assistance the butter was made, weighed, packed up, and sent off to market in due time.

Margery had made herself ill by over-exertion during the last week of the harvest, and continuing for some time indisposed, she often claimed John's assistance in the dairy work, so that added to his other occupations he had his hands pretty full. But he was cheerful and contented; he had sufficient wholesome food, and so much exercise in the open air kept him strong and healthy.

In about two months from the time he was first hired, the boy whose place John had filled came back to the farm, and he returned home.

Mrs. Hartley was by this time tolerably well recovered, and able again to earn a little money. The illness, however, was still a heavy weight upon the family, for there was the doctor to pay, and the rent was not forthcoming as heretofore.

Betsey was too necessary for her mother to think of her trying for a little place, but it became every day more and more desirable that John should go to service. Could he be fortunate enough to get a situation where the wages were pretty good, he would not only be able to maintain himself, but have it in his power to help clear off the debts, which mother and children all felt to be a heavy burden.

Mrs. Hartley had hitherto paid her way without running up a bill, however small, and she had impressed on the minds of her offspring the meanness and wickedness of incurring expenses without having the means to pay them.

"But in this instance, mother," said John and Betsey, "it could not be helped."

"I believe not, my dears," said Mrs. Hartley;

"and, please God to bless my endeavours, I will not cease striving till I have paid every farthing I owe."

"You must not exert yourself too much, mother," said John; "only let me get a place, and see what I will do."

"I should be sorry, my dear boy, to take your earnings, under any other circumstances," said Mrs. Hartley; "what you have to spare ought to be laid by for yourself."

"I shall always want to be helping you, mother; now and always. Why, have you not brought me up, worked for me, and taught me all I know? and it is little I can do in return."

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## CHAPTER VIII.

WHAT John thought likely to happen respecting Robert Bell did take place. He was not long in his situation; why he left it did not appear to be generally known. Some said he was idle, and by some it was feared that he had neither spoken the truth nor been strictly honest. But whatever the cause, it was certain that the boy had received his dismissal, and that the place had to be filled up by another. It so happened that John did not hear the news for some time, for he had obtained some trifling employment with a gardener who lived in an opposite direction to the "Plough;" but being sent one morning by his master with a packet of seeds to a house near the little inn, he saw as he passed Robert sitting on a bench outside his father's house. John paused, and though he had not much acquaint-

ance with the boy, he was making up his mind to inquire "why he was at home," for John surmised that Robert would not be idling his time away at that hour in the day if he was still in service, when a man came up and called out, "So you have left your place, Bob; nicer to be at home doing nothing, is it not?" and the man laughed, while Robert got up and walked away, affronted.

The circumstance of Mrs. William Anderson's much-desired situation being vacant, greatly excited John, and he hurried home to communicate the news to his mother and sister. Betsey was out, but Mrs. Hartley entered fully into her boy's hopes and wishes on the subject, and offered no discouragement to his desire to try for the place, and it was settled that he should on the following morning, dressed in his best clothes, repair to the lady's house, and inquire if he might be likely to suit. And, furthermore, at his urgent request, his mother agreed to accompany him, he saying that she could speak so much better than he could, and tell what he was capable of doing better far than he could himself. He was in high spirits at the mere chance of obtaining a situation he had thought so much about, and so greatly desired to have; and he ran off to look over his best clothes, and brush them well, and see that no repairs were wanted; and he was busily employed cleaning and polishing his thin boots, when, hearing his sister return, he hastened to meet her and tell his news, and the hopes it had inspired him with.

"Robert Bell is come away from his place, Betsey," exclaimed he, "and I am going to try for it; mother says I may, and she is going herself with me. We are going to-morrow morning."

But Betsey, instead of entering as usual into her

brother's feelings of pleasure, looked very grave and said, "I am afraid, John, it is no use; I heard when I was out that Bell's son was gone home, and that the situation is already filled. I was told Sam Pool has got it."

"Sam Pool," repeated John, looking greatly vexed; "Sam Pool, why, he is in service at Greyton."

"He was," replied Betsey, "but, as I am informed, he came home a week ago, and hearing that Mrs. William Anderson was in want of a servant boy, he offered himself, and was hired."

John's disappointment was very great; to have been so near what he wished for, and to have lost it, was so grievous! Lost it too, as he thought, for want of a little information; for had he known Robert Bell was come away he might have had the same chance of a trial as another. And what tended to increase the regret was that the gardener no longer wanted John's assistance, for the very next day the boy was informed that it was now so late in the year, that he and his man could do all that was necessary about the grounds.

John was very diligent in pursuing his inquiries after a situation, but day after day and week after week passed, and nothing was to be met with. In the mean time he made himself useful in various ways at home. All his mother's messages about work, and the carrying and fetching it he undertook. He did the little errands at the shop; prepared the meals, and kept the house-places clean and neat, sweeping and brushing and setting in order, and doing a variety of things which were generally the business of his sister, but which now by his undertaking left her at liberty to assist her mother with

her needle; and this was no small help, for Betsey was becoming a quick and expert little workwoman.

John's eagerness was great to get employment as a servant boy, and to have his occupations of a more manly kind; but as that did not seem to be likely at present, he did not allow himself to feel discontented, nor to get out of temper. He did everything he undertook cheerfully and with a willing mind, and it often cheered his mother and sister, as they sat stitching, to hear him gaily whistling or singing as he went about his work. Neither was he without a little recreation himself, for going very frequently to and fro to a house from whence his mother received the largest portion of her work, he often used to encounter Howard and his raw recruits on their way to drill. A little observation showed him that by taking a different path to the one he usually pursued, he could, without prolonging his walk, pass through the field where the men were exercising. He mentioned the circumstance to his mother, and when there was no particular haste required on his errand to this said house, she gave him leave to stop and look on. The training of the recruits interested the boy very much, for he saw how by steady daily practice, even the most awkward were improved; how they grew straight and upright; how their heads, once nodding about, now seemed fixed firmly on their necks; how the shoulders, once shrugged up to the ears, now kept down in their place; and how the shambling walk was changed into a regular measured tread. The boy looked with admiration at the fine military figure of the sergeant as he stepped lightly about, waving his small stick, and giving the word of command, and wished more than ever he could be under a man who worked such wonders.

One day returning home more than ever impressed with the magical powers of Howard, he detained his sister, who was hanging out clothes in the garden, to listen to an account of a most astonishing change that had been effected in the air and carriage of a youth whom they had both once known to be noted as the awkwardest lad in the parish.

"Now, just look here," said John, "I will show you the first thing Howard does when he has to train a chap like that. Don't go, Betsey," continued her brother eagerly, laying hold of her to detain her, "do let me show you, it will not take a moment."

"I must not stop, John dear," replied his sister; "mother is in such a hurry for me to go in. But why, as you know what the sergeant does to improve these awkward youths, do you not do it yourself?"

"What, Betsey?" said John, not quite comprehending his sister's meaning.

"Why, train yourself. Do just what Howard makes the recruits do. You go so often to the exercise ground, you can remember what you see, and come home and practise it."

"That is just what I will do," said John to himself, as he was left standing in the garden after Betsey had run in to her mother. "How strange I never thought of that before! How sharp girls are, to be sure!"

John diligently followed his sister's advice, for every spare moment he could obtain he practised the exercises Howard used in drilling the recruits. The consequence was, that in no great length of time his figure and carriage were very much improved.

"You will do for a lady's place now, John," said Betsey, when with approving looks she had watched her brother going through some of the last and most

difficult portions of the military exercises he had learned by looking on.

"Ah!" said John, in reply, "but where is the place?"

"Oh! never despair," said Betsey. "Is it not much better that you should have waited? If you had got the situation you so much wished for, you might have been turned away for your awkwardness."

"There is no knowing," said John; "we must hope the best."

"That is right," said Mrs. Hartley, who happened to overhear what the children were saying; "we must not only hope, but we must believe that everything is for the best. An all-wise and merciful God orders everything for us; and the thought that all events, whether small or great, are overruled by Him, will console us under every trouble, and reconcile us to every disappointment."

One morning, when John had just finished sweeping and "making the room tidy," and Mrs. Hartley and Betsey were sitting down to work, Mr. Power, the medical man who attended Mrs. Hartley in her long illness, rode up to the door, and dismounting, entered the house. There was a small sum of money ready for him—half the customary savings of the week; as he received it he said, "I did not come for this; I do not wish to hurry you in your payment; I merely called as I was going by, to inquire if you keep pretty well, or if there is anything I can do for you."

Mrs. Hartley replied that she was getting stronger every day.

"That is well," said Mr. Power, "and how are the nurses? Betsey, I see, is working away, and making good use of her time." Then turning with



a smiling countenance to John, he continued, "and your little man is busy and active as ever, keeping all clean and comfortable, I perceive."

"He is a good boy," said his mother, "and very kind and useful; but, poor fellow, I wish he had some more suitable employment. I wish he was in service, for his own sake and for ours, for his wages would be a great help just now. If not taking too great a liberty, sir, to speak about it to you, you might perhaps chance to know of a place for which my boy might do."

Mr. Power reflected for a moment, then said he did not recollect any one at the present time who was in want of a servant boy, but he would bear the subject in mind, and let her know if he should hear of anything likely to suit. Then again repeating his desire that Mrs. Hartley would not hurry herself to discharge her debt, he rode off. But he had hardly been gone five minutes away from the door, when he came cantering quickly back, and calling out, said, "I think I know of a place for the boy."

John and his mother hastened forward, and Mr. Power continued: "It has just come into my mind that a young married lady, at whose house I am now going to call, has discharged her page, and will most likely be on the look-out for another. I will mention John; should he suit, he will have a good mistress, and I trust he will do his best to give satisfaction. I should be sorry to be the means of her engaging a boy who would not turn out well; for she has been quite unlucky, having had two already in her service. I think, John, you would do credit to my recommendation; you may tell her I sent you. The lady is Mrs. William Anderson; she lives at 'The Elms,' a villa a mile and a half from Downton, on the London road."

Mrs. Hartley expressed her grateful thanks to the kind doctor; but John could hardly give utterance to the delight he felt. His looks, however, spoke his unbounded satisfaction, and fancying himself already Mrs. William Anderson's servant, he drew up his head, set himself in his best attitude, and bowed profoundly as Mr. Power rode off.

What a change had the last quarter of an hour made in the feelings of this poor family! Mrs. Hartley, who had recently experienced such great mercy from her heavenly Father, in His having raised her from a bed of severe sickness, felt strongly moved at this fresh instance of God's watchful providence over herself and children. It is true, John was not certain to obtain the place in question, but it was a great matter that there was a prospect of it; and there was the certainty that her son had so conducted himself as to merit the recommendation of so excellent a man as Mr. Power.

Betsey was nearly as much pleased as her brother, and all impatience to have him set off to offer himself, and assured him she felt certain he would get the place, if it was still vacant.

It was yet early in the day, and Mrs. Hartley, thinking that the time would suit very well for waiting upon the lady, hastened to prepare herself, and accompanied her son on his eventful errand.

Mrs. William Anderson was at home and disengaged, and Mrs. Hartley having stated the business upon which she was come, she and her son were admitted into the lady's presence. They were graciously received; but when John found himself actually in the presence of the lady whom he had been so desirous of living with, and cast his eyes down upon the handsome carpet he was standing on, and around upon all the expensive and elegant furniture with

which the room was decorated, he rejoiced that he had brought his mother to speak for him. Betsey would have been far from pleased with her brother had she seen him stand colouring up to the eyes, and shrinking behind his mother every time Mrs. William Anderson asked him a question. Fortunately, his manners did not appear to cause a positive objection, for the lady imagined that the boy's shyness would wear off when he got accustomed to all that was now new and strange to him. She continued, therefore, to question his mother as to his capabilities.

Mrs. Hartley stated that her son had lived for a few weeks with a farmer, whom she believed would give the boy a character for truth and honesty.

"Those qualities," said the lady, "with willingness to do what is required of him, are what I chiefly desire in a young servant. There is much to teach and much to learn when a boy first goes to service in a gentleman's family."

Mrs. Hartley said, and with truth, that John was very willing to work.

"If so," said Mrs. William Anderson, "it lessens the trouble of teaching. I have been married but a short time, and have already had two servant boys, both of whom I was obliged to discharge just after they had learned the ways of the place. The last, by the by, was, I think, a neighbour of yours; he came, I believe, from the same street where you say you live. I fear his father must have brought him up badly, and put some very wrong notions into his head. Do you know the lad, his name is Samuel Pool?"

Now, Mrs. Hartley was never willing to say anything to the prejudice of another, therefore she only replied, "Samuel has been some time away from

home. He went to live with a family at Greyton, and I hoped, as he was a quick active boy, he would have retained his situation."

"The lad," said Mrs. William Anderson, "was by no means wanting in intelligence; on the contrary, he was capable of making a very good servant: but he had got an idea into his head that all persons were on an equality, and that there ought to be no masters and no servants. This led to frequent disputes in the kitchen, when he, as the youngest servant, was required to do several little offices which usually fall to their lot. He would rebel, and say such and such a thing was not his place to do, and when remonstrated with, he would exclaim with the greatest assurance, 'who told you to order me about? I am not going to mind you! I am as good as you!'"

"It is a sad pity," said Mrs. Hartley, "that a father should bring up his children with such wrong notions. It is to be hoped that as they grow older, and get more out into the world, they will learn to know better."

A few more questions were asked by the lady respecting John, the answers to which apparently gave satisfaction, for he was hired, his wages, &c., agreed upon, and the day fixed for his entering his new service.

John was so exceedingly delighted and excited at the success of his application, that his mother, who was of a calm and reasoning nature, thought it better to put him on his guard against having his expectations raised too high, lest disappointment should ensue, as he might fail in his duties.

"You must expect, John," said she, "trials in this situation, as well as in every other in life. You may often have to bear blame from your

master and mistress; your fellow-servants may frequently be unpleasant, even ill-natured to you; you may be set to do things that will tire your patience; and you may occasionally incur displeasure where you feel you have not deserved it."

"Yes, mother," replied the boy; "but I shall have a good place and a kind mistress, and as for anything else, I shall care nothing about it."

"I hope, my dear boy," said Mrs. Hartley, "you will continue to think so, and act accordingly. You will do well to remember, that if you are well off in the points that are most material, you must not mind trifles, and even be cheerful under small privations and inconveniences."

"I will, mother," said John; "and when I come home for a holiday I will tell you all about my place, and you will point out where I have done wrong, and put me right."

"I will, my dear," said Mrs. Hartley, earnestly, "and I will pray that God's blessing may attend you in your new life, and inspire you with an earnest desire to do your duty."

"I will say my prayers, mother, and take my Bible with me," said John, who as his mother talked began to reflect that the importance of the duties he would have to perform would, if they did not outweigh, at any rate, equal the pleasure he was anticipating.

"You must," continued his mother, "be very respectful in your manners to your mistress and master; and mind and be very attentive to the orders they give you. Many mistakes arise with young servants, and with old ones too, from not properly listening to what is said. If you do not understand what you are told at first, ask again; it is better to do so than occasion trouble by misappre-

hension. Be always ready to do what is required of you, and make yourself generally useful, never saying, 'It is not my place to do such or such a thing.' Good servants think it is their place to do whatever is necessary or useful for the well-being of the family in which they are living."

"I am sure, mother," said John, "I shall always be ready to serve Mrs. William Anderson well."

"I hope so, my dear," said his mother; "good servants should strive to make things go on pleasantly; and one way of doing this is to avoid all contentions and quarrels with their fellow-servants."

"And, mother," said Betsey, who took a lively interest in all that concerned her brother, and was most anxious for his well-doing, "do you not think that if John breaks anything he ought to tell his mistress, the same as he does you when he meets with an accident?"

"Most certainly, dear, he ought," replied Mrs. Hartley; "to be true and open in all things is what I most anxiously desire that your brother should be. Not to say anything of the wickedness, nothing is so mean as deceit and sly ways."

"I shall be very careful," said John, "with everything that is intrusted to me."

"Much damage," said Mrs. Hartley, "is caused by want of proper care, and young servants are too apt to be giddy; and this reminds me of what has always been on my mind to talk to you about whenever the time should come for your going to live in a gentleman's family."

"What is that, mother?" said John, who always set great store by Mrs. Hartley's counsels.

"It is, John," replied she, "to warn you against going to play with any of the servants. Few things are more unpleasant to a mistress than to hear,

when she is sitting quiet in her room, or perhaps passing near the kitchen, shouts of laughter, or sounds of play and romping. Be steady and quiet yourself in your ways with your fellow-servants, and never suffer them to be too free with you. They may laugh at you at first for your grave airs, as they will perhaps call them, but they will respect you in the end."

It is a great event in a boy's life the first going out to service. Much of his future well or ill doing, for years to come, depends on the way he conducts himself at this period. There is so much that is new; so many temptations assail him; so many trials he never before experienced await him, that he has need of constant prayer and watchfulness to keep him in the right path.

Happy is he who has a good and sensible mother to give him proper advice; and well is it for him if he remembers her counsels, and strives to act upon them.

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## CHAPTER IX.

From the time that John knew he was to have "the place" he so much desired, up to nearly the hour of his departure, it must be owned that his thoughts were almost entirely occupied by himself. His mind was for ever running upon what he should do there, what he should see, and what would be said to him. But on the last evening, when he was about to start on a new and far different life, a change came over his feelings. He had been very busy collecting his books and a few trifling matters that he valued, and had brought

them to his mother to put in the box that contained his clothes. She was still busy getting all ready for him, and as he looked at her he thought she appeared weak and tired, and as though she had over-excited herself in her endeavours "to get all his things nice and comfortable for him."

"Mother, dear," cried he, "how good you are to me! but you are tiring yourself too much. You will be ill again, and I shall not be here to nurse you." Then looking round the room, and noting each familiar object, he added, "After all, it is a great trial to leave home. I shall often think of you and Betsey sitting here at your work, while I am gone away from you. And, mother, do you know I am thinking if I had no other reason for striving to do my duty, I would be a good boy for your sake. I do so wish to make you happy!"

"And you will make me happy, my dear boy, if you strive to do your duty—your duty to God and man. And I shall rejoice if you so conduct yourself that you will be able to keep your place. It is an old saying, and a true one, 'that a rolling stone gathers no moss;' and it is equally true that servants who are frequently changing their places injure their prospects and their character, while those who by good conduct retain their situations, often become the humble friends of their masters and mistresses, and meet their reward accordingly."

When John was at the farm, he knew that he should remain there only a very short time, and it did not appear like the final leaving his mother and sister and quitting home as it did now. He looked forward to a speedy return to his family; but now he felt he was about to enter life in earnest, and make his own way for good or for evil. His heart was so full, and his mind so occupied by the im-



portant step he was taking, that it took from him a good deal of the shy feeling he expected to experience on first mixing with strangers, and entering into a situation so wholly different from anything to which he had hitherto been accustomed.

He did not see his master and mistress the evening he arrived, neither did the servants take much notice of him : there was company in the drawing-room, and all were occupied with their own business. The next morning, however, it was very different; and very different indeed he found it from the farm, for every one pointed out some employment or other for him. The footman told him to clean the boots and shoes; the cook desired him to clean the knives; and the housemaid bid him be ready to take in the breakfast-things as soon as she had done the room. Then he was to assist in making toast, cutting bread and butter, and, lastly, to follow with the coffee while the footman carried the urn into the breakfast-room.

John looked anxiously to see if his mistress would notice him, but she was very busy talking to a friend who was on a visit to her, and he went in and out two or three times without her observing him. At last she did; but the manner of it was not very pleasant to him, for in obeying the call of his master, who asked for some toast, he stumbled over a footstool, and spilled the contents of the plate on the carpet, close to the lady's nice muslin morning-gown.

"Oh! it is the new boy," said she, shaking her dress; then, seeing John's look of distress, she good-naturedly added, "never mind; all is strange at first; there is no great harm done."

John gathered up the fallen toast as quickly as he could, and made his way off to the kitchen,

thoroughly vexed to have made so awkward a beginning, nor was his annoyance lessened by the footman's calling him a "gawky," and the maids laughing at him. All the time he was rubbing the spoons and washing the glasses, he was thinking over his accident, and resolving to be more careful for the future. He made his appearance again before his mistress at luncheon-time, but nothing particular occurred then, and he hastened in full glee to prepare himself to accompany her in her afternoon drive in her pony-carriage. But here again he was unlucky, not from want of attention, for he was most anxious to do well, but in consequence of his ignorance and inexperience of what was proper to be done. He was standing beside the pony while the ladies got into the carriage, and when seated his mistress said something to him which he did not plainly hear, and he called out loud,

"What? What do you say?"

This sounded so drolly in the young lady's ears that she laughed right out, while John stood confused and colouring, not knowing what he had done. His mistress kindly beckoned him up to her, and in a gentle voice said,

"When you do not hear what I say to you, John, come up to me, look at me, and touch your hat, and I will tell you again what I want. Now give me the whip, and get in behind, and we will drive off."

There were two or three guests at dinner that day, and one happened to be a travelled gentleman, just such a one as John had once expressed so great a desire to hear talk. The desire was not lessened, and great was the gratification he experienced as two or three marvellous incidents dropped from the lips of this gentleman, as he conversed with the lady he sat next. He was a small eater and a great talker, and

man desiring him "to let everything alone, as all he did was to make work."

"And worse than that," said the cook; "to do mischief."

John stole away to have a long fit of crying, and by the time the parlour breakfast was over, he was a piteous object to look at, with his red swollen eyes, and his face white with trouble. Still there was a duty to be performed, and it was no use delaying it. Mortifying as it was, he must present himself before his mistress, and tell her of the mischief he had done. Collecting therefore the pieces of the broken glasses, he went straight to her, and told of what had happened.

It has been stated that Mrs. William Anderson was of a very kind and forgiving temper, still it was perfectly natural that she should be much vexed at having her beautiful glasses broken; spoiling the set and destroying in part the kind old gentleman Mr. Anderson's wedding present. She looked very sorry, and spoke with considerable displeasure to John.

"I am afraid," said she, "that you are a careless boy, and take no pains to do well. Surely if you tried you might do better; you have made so many blunders in the very short time you have been here, that I fear you will not suit me, and——"

"Oh, don't send me away," said John, interrupting her with a burst of eager entreaty; "I am so very sorry for having broken your beautiful glasses, and for all my stupid ways, but I would do anything for you. Do, pray, let me stay. You don't know how I wish to serve you truly and well."

Mrs. William Anderson, who had been fitting some of the parts of the broken glasses together, to see if there was any mending them, laid them down and looked steadily at John.

"You do not seem a hardened boy," said she; "you appear sorry for the mischief you have done."

"Oh! indeed, indeed I am," cried John; "I should be so glad to please you, instead, instead —" he could say no more, for tears and sobs choked his utterance.

"Well, well," said the kindhearted lady, "do not cry so; I forgive you, you may stay. But be more careful in future."

John's delighted thanks were cut short by the entrance of the cook, who came for orders about dinner, and he was sent off to his pantry duties.

"That boy will do no good here," said the cook, looking after him with a frowning brow. "He is not fit for a place like this."

"I do not know, cook," replied her mistress; "the poor boy has made an awkward beginning, but there is a truth and honesty about him that I like."

"Well, ma'am," replied the cook, "just as you please, he is your servant. It is no concern of mine;" then in a low voice, not exactly meant for her mistress's ear, she added, "the faults of another are not so soon looked over."

In saying this the cook alluded to Robert Bell, whose parents were great friends of hers, and whose son she was very desirous to have kept in the kitchen under her. She had screened as much as possible all Robert's faults, and felt much injured when he was turned away. Indeed, so displeased was she that she resolved to set her face against any boy who succeeded him, and not only be hard with him in the kitchen, but magnify all his faults to the mistress and master.

Mrs. Anderson had taken a good deal of pains in instructing the two lads who preceded John, striving to make them not only honest and sincere, but quick

But when the morning came, and he was refreshed with sleep, and comforted by the prayers he said, he determined resolutely to stop on. He reflected, as he had been instructed to do, that this is a life of trial; that our rest and our pleasure are not in this world. He considered that he must expect to have his share of evil, and that the annoyances he was now subjected to formed a part of his trials, and that it was his duty to bear them patiently. And now and then he was not without hope, that if he abstained from angry replies when he was provoked, and persisted in being civil and obliging, while others were rude and ill-natured, he might at last win the good-will of his fellow-servants.

Mrs. Anderson, though carefully and well brought up, had been married so short a time, and had so much to amuse and engross her attention, that she had not yet entered fully into the duties of house-keeping. At present she was satisfied that the cook sent up the dinners comfortably, that there seemed to be no extravagant outlay, and that the rooms and every department of the house were kept clean and neat. John, young as he was, thought that there was certain "goings on" in the kitchen, and among the servants, that, should they come under the mistress's eye, would not meet with her approval. Still, he was very new to the sort of service he was in, and he could not tell what might be customary. To judge according to the way in which he had been brought up, he should decidedly say they were wrong. He was considered a boy of such dull comprehension, that little pains were taken by the servants to hide from him things which they most certainly would not have liked their mistress to be acquainted with.

Among what was objectionable, John remarked

that want of punctuality and slackness in doing their work was growing into a habit with them. The housemaid frequently overslept herself, and thus ran the risk of putting her master, who was obliged to keep early hours, to great inconvenience. The first time it happened after John came to the house, she exclaimed and lamented how much she was behind-hand, and how she should "get blowed up," that he, pitying her distress, offered to help her, which, from having got forward with his own work, he was able to do. Receiving an ungracious acceptance of his services, he set to and swept and dusted the room while she cleaned the grate and fireirons, after which he set the breakfast things for her, and everything was arranged and in good order by the time the heads of the family made their appearance.

It was not many days before the same "oversleeping" occurred again to Mary; and on making her appearance, yawning, and untidily dressed, she commanded John to "come along" and help get the breakfast-room ready. This he did not only then, but again and again, and it more than once happened that there would have been an untidy fireplace if it had not been for his diligence. The other servants, observing how useful "the boy" could be made, began to shove a portion of their duties on to him, so that it was often difficult for him to do his own work. And all this without any thanks, or even a little more civility.

But harassing as John's life was, it was not wholly devoid of pleasure. He occasionally went out in the pony-chaise with his mistress; and those were times of considerable enjoyment. The little carriage was constructed to carry three persons, two in front and one on a small seat behind; and when there were

not two ladies besides Mrs. Anderson, John went the drive. Now and then it happened that he accompanied his mistress alone, and then she had him to sit beside her in front, in order that she might teach him to drive. This was an easy task, for being anxious to improve himself in everything likely to be useful, he had, when seated alone behind, carefully observed the right way of passing and meeting a carriage, and had noticed the exact way in which the whip and reins ought to be held.

One day, when out alone with his mistress, he seemed so wrapt up in his own thoughts that he hardly paid attention to the directions she gave him. After a time, suddenly turning to her, he said,

"Please, ma'am, may I speak to you?" and on receiving permission he informed her that a few days ago he had been again unfortunate in breaking a basin.

"I wanted," continued he, "to come and tell you of my accident directly, but Pullen" (that was the name of the footman) "would not let me. He said you would rather have a dozen basins broken than have me go 'blubberin,' that was his word, to you about it; and cook called out, 'why, it did not cost more than sixpence.'" The boy paused a moment, then continued: "Sixpence is a good deal; mother could buy two loaves for sixpence. Now, ma'am, please to tell me if it was not right that I should let you know of the damage I had done?"

"You would have been right, John, to have told me."

"I knew so," said the boy; and he was again silent for a time, then turning round, and looking his mistress full in the face, he said,

"Why do you not come more into the kitchen? You ought."

Mrs. Anderson could not forbear a smile at her young servant's abrupt manner; though he was far from intending to be rude.

"I am afraid, John," said she, "you do not think me a good housekeeper."

"I think you good," said he, "very good; but, but——" he hesitated.

"But I ought to come more into the kitchen," said the lady, smiling; "that is what you mean, I think."

"Please, ma'am, take the reins, I cannot drive and talk," said John; and then feeling more at his ease, he entered upon the subject that was weighing on his mind. "Robert Bell," said he, "Robert Bell, who used to live with you, comes at least twice a week. Is it by your orders?"

"No; I never desired him to call," replied Mrs. Anderson. "I have never seen him; at what hour does he usually come?"

"As soon as cook is up," answered John; "and she is always down first; except me. But I believe she don't mind me, she thinks me so stupid."

"But you do not tell me what Robert comes for: is it to bring the cook anything?"

"He always brings an empty bag, but it goes away full."

"What is it filled with?"

"Once," said John, not answering directly to his mistress's question, "the cook turned sharp upon me, and asked me what I was there prowling about for. I said I was only about my business; going into the pantry for my spoons. So she did not say anything more to me; but she handed Robert his bag, saying, 'There, take that, there are some bones for your dog.' " Then John added very gravely, "I do not think dripping is bones, or that dogs are fed



on it; though they may like nice slices of mutton or beef."

Mrs. Anderson had no suspicion that her cook was guilty of any pilfering tricks; she thought John was probably mistaken in his surmise that Robert Bell carried off anything that he ought not. She therefore asked her young servant what reason he had for supposing that dripping was put into the visitor's bag instead of bones for a dog.

"Because," John replied, "I saw cook put in a jar full that I had seen standing the night before on a shelf. I knew the jar directly, for it was a white one with a blue border, and had a piece broken out at the top; besides, when I looked soon after, the jar was gone."

"And as to the slices of meat, John, what about them?" said his mistress.

"A joint," replied the boy, "gets less when pieces are cut off it; and it shows very plain, too, when it is fresh cut. I see it the first thing in the morning looking dry, and then, a short time after, quite moist. I can see sharp enough when I think a person is wronged."

Mrs. Anderson did not then make any remark, and John continued: "My mother says that all that is to be given away should be by the orders of the mistress; and that the servants have no right to dispose of the smallest scrap without her leave. And, ma'am, my schoolmaster once said to one of our boys, who was going to a place, 'that servants ought to be the guardians of their master's and mistress's property.' I remembered the master's words; but I did not seem to understand them till I came to live here."

"I must see into all this," said Mrs. Anderson, after a time, during which she appeared to have been

intently thinking. "You have done right in speaking to me. Now take the reins and drive home."

On their way back, Mrs. Anderson said, "If the other servants, John, were to know what you have told me, they would doubtless be very angry with you, and bear you a great deal of ill-will."

"I should not care for that," said John, stoutly. "If I see what is wrong going on, I shall always speak out."

"You will do well to do so," replied his mistress; "you will find it more to your own interest to be the mistress's rather than the servant's friend."

"Yes, ma'am," said the boy.

"You must understand," continued she, "that what I mean is, that though it is right to live on pleasant terms with your fellow-servants, and to be kind and obliging to them, it would be very wrong to conceal their improper conduct in order to save them from getting blamed. You must choose between the two; you cannot be friends with an ill-conducted servant and your masters. The first thing is to do what is right in the sight of God, and then next to reflect how your behaviour will influence your own interests. It will strike sensible servants that the master can benefit them, while they can hope for no advancement from their fellows."

On arriving at home, just before stepping out of the carriage, Mrs. Anderson desired John, neither then, nor at any future time, to let any of the servants know the communications that he had been making to her. This she did to spare the boy much that would have made his situation very unpleasant; for though he himself said he did not care, she, as an older and more experienced person, knew that he would draw upon himself ill-will and persecution, if

it was known that he, to use servants' language, had been "telling tales."

Mrs. Anderson's suspicions that she was not fairly dealt with being awakened by John, she was led to observe many things which before had escaped her notice, and she soon became painfully convinced of the dishonesty of her cook. The woman received her discharge; but she never knew to whom she in the first instance owed the discovery of her misdeeds. Very soon after the cook was gone, the footman gave notice of his intention to leave his place, and his example being followed by the housemaid, there was an entire change of domestics at "The Elms."

Mrs. Anderson had a valuable little Alderney cow, which she called "Beauty," and which was in truth so pretty, that she deserved her name; but her best quality was that of yielding an abundance of rich, delicious milk. The cook in the family was required to milk and "dairy;" but it was not an easy matter readily to find a person who combined a knowledge of good cookery with the management of a dairy, however small a dairy might be. It was not surprising, therefore, that this important situation remained a considerable time before it was satisfactorily filled. In the mean time, who was to attend to Beauty? No delay could be allowed respecting her, so a farm-boy out of place was engaged for the milking, and a woman who professed to understand making butter was hired to come till such time as a properly qualified person for the place could be found. But things did not go on smoothly and well with what concerned the little cow. The boy, who had been discharged from the farm where he had worked for idleness, was frequently behind his time, and once he did not come at all; the butter, too, was ill made, being occasionally sent up to table with the whey

not properly removed, and even with hairs in it; and the cream and milk for want of cleanliness, were often sour.

John was present one morning at breakfast when his master, on putting cream into his tea, and finding it sour, declared that he never now had cream fit to drink; while Mrs. Anderson was quietly removing some hairs from a portion of butter she was about to hand her husband. The boy lingered in the room as if he wished to speak, yet could not quite make up his mind to do so, and his mistress observing him, asked, in her usual pleasant manner, if he wanted to say anything. Thus encouraged, he burst forth into strong condemnation of Mrs. Wells's untidy ways and imperfect knowledge of her business.

"We did not make butter in that way at the Manor Farm," exclaimed he; "and we kept everything so nice, it was quite beautiful."

"Who do you mean by we?" asked Mrs. Anderson, smiling.

"Why, Margery and I," replied the boy. "When she was poorly I milked for her, and churned, and helped make the butter; indeed, I sometimes made it all alone, only she sat by and looked on. And, if you please, ma'am and sir, to let me—that is, if you will send the others quite away—I will milk, and, with the housemaid's help, make the butter; and you shall not have such nasty stuff to drink any more, nor have bad butter to eat."

Mr. Anderson turned round to look with surprise at the boy; but he said nothing, only, shaking his head, went on with his newspaper and his breakfast. Mrs. Anderson, however, who knew John better than her husband, felt sure that her young servant was in earnest in what he said; and though he might think

too highly of his own powers, and on trial might not come up to all he professed, she still thought his proposal worth consideration, and dismissed him, saying, she would speak to him again on the subject.

As soon as John had left the room, Mr. Anderson said, laughing, "You certainly are the kindest person I know, and always most ready to believe good of every one; but it is perfect nonsense, my dear, to imagine that a boy, a mere child like John, could manage a dairy. Don't go and send those other persons away till we can get some one else; bad as they are, they are better than nobody."

Mrs. Anderson thought this advice judicious; indeed, she had herself no intention of acting hastily, but she determined to make trial of John's skill as dairyman.

Having his mistress's permission, he set to work in the afternoon, to get all the pans and pail thoroughly sweetened with boiling water; and before the farm boy arrived he had milked and bestowed the produce in due order in the dairy. By a little good management he contrived to have sufficient cream to make a small quantity of butter the following morning; and long before Mrs. Wells made her appearance, he had placed on his mistress's breakfast-table a pat of well-made butter, and a jug of new milk, and another of thick, sweet cream; and he had the satisfaction of hearing his master say that he had not enjoyed his breakfast so much for a great many days. It was above a fortnight before a competent cook was found, and during that time John continued to fill his self-imposed office regularly and well. When he was called upon to give it up, his master made him a present of five shillings, and, better even than the money, he called him a "clever lad."

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John was greatly pleased, and in the midst of his joy he thanked his mother for the advice she had given him on first going to the Manor Farm, "to try and learn things the knowledge of which might some day or other prove useful." Had it not been for her wise counsel, he would not have learned what had just made him of value to his employers, nor have earned for himself an unexpected and pleasant reward.

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## CHAPTER XI.

AN entire change of servants at "The Elms" made John's life somewhat different, but a greater difference arose to him from the introduction of a new member into the family. The eldest Mrs. Anderson died suddenly. Her death was deeply lamented by her relatives and a large circle of friends, both rich and poor. But on no one did the blow fall so heavily as on the youngest son of the family—the poor afflicted boy who was mentioned at the beginning of this tale. He was now about John's age, but from his birth he had been a sickly child, and latterly a complaint in the spine confined him chiefly to the sofa; and either from the nature of his malady, or want of healthful exercise, one leg had become shorter than the other, so that when he walked he limped as if he was lame. He was an acute, clever boy, but constant suffering, together with the being deprived of the natural pleasures of his age, rendered him too often fretful and peevish. He was, however, capable of strong affection, and was devotedly attached to his mother; and well he might be, for she was a most tender parent, and did everything

in her power to alleviate the sufferings of her child, and to afford him all the consolation and comfort in her power. She would sit for hours beside his sofa, reading to him, or seeking to enliven him by little histories of what was passing around; or she would enter into his childish amusements, and assist him in any little plans that were devised for his entertainment. Above everything, she strove, by gentle religious instruction, to lead her poor boy to look for comfort to his heavenly Father, and to believe that great as his affliction was, it was not sent to make him miserable, but for some ultimate good.

It was deeply distressing to all those about him, to witness the terrible hold that grief for the loss of his mother took upon him. He refused all comfort and all nourishment, and only lay calling upon her to return to him. His father, whose deep grief was of a quiet and resigned order, strove to console him, and to lead him to feel proper submission to the Divine will. But his efforts were attended with small success.

Next to his mother, Edward, that was the name of this poor unhappy boy, loved his eldest brother William. He alone of all the family had any influence over the heart-stricken child; to him only would he listen with patience, and from him only would he receive any nourishment. Mr. William Anderson had always been strongly attracted towards his young brother, and he had been like a second father to him from his infancy. At this particular time, Edward was doubly wretched whenever William went away from him; but however willing to indulge the poor boy, the nature of the eldest brother's own business and occupations precluded the possibility of his giving up to Edward a great deal of his time. It was therefore with no

small pleasure and satisfaction that Mr. William Anderson heard and accepted his wife's kind proposal to have Edward come to them, and remain with them till his spirits recovered from the severe shock they had just sustained. This lady had always been a favourite with Edward, from the kind attention she paid him, and from her frequently bringing him books, or some little present or other when she went to the house. It was, therefore, not unwillingly that the poor boy allowed himself to be removed from his father's residence to that of his brother. But when there, it required no small share of patience and forbearance on the part of the young couple to put up with the wayward temper and immoderate grief of their little brother. He exacted such close and constant attention from Mrs. Anderson during the morning hours, when Mr. William was away at the bank, that at length her health began to suffer from confinement to the house. Her husband became aware of this, and insisted that she should resume her usual drives in her pony-carriage; and it must be allowed that Edward, through tears of lamentation at losing her company for a time, owned that she ought not to sacrifice everything for him.

It happened one day, when John was not out with his mistress, and while he was occupied in a room adjoining that in which Edward was lying, he heard the invalid boy moaning and crying in a most distressing manner. The young servant listened, thinking Edward was perhaps calling for help, and that he ought to go and inquire if this was the case. But on listening more attentively, he perceived that the cries were the outbursts of a deeply-afflicted heart.

"Oh! mother, mother; why are you gone away



from me? why did you leave me?" were the words, repeated again and again, that struck on John's ear.

The tone of anguish in which they were uttered went to John's heart, and, using no ceremony, he rushed in to offer such comfort as lay in his humble power.

"Don't, don't cry so, poor Master Edward!" exclaimed he; "is there anything I can do for you? I am very sorry for you. Is there nothing I can do?"

The earnest and feeling manner in which this was spoken, roused Edward from his paroxysm of grief, and a momentary feeling of thankfulness for such unexpected sympathy crossed his mind.

"Let me raise you on your sofa," said John; "a little change would ease you; there," continued he, as he placed a cushion to support the weak back, "now you can look out and see the blue sky, and the sun shining on the lawn." Then hastening away he quickly returned with a little treasure of his own, which he brought to the invalid boy. It was a small chair of John's own making; it consisted of pieces of notched wood, that could be separated and then put together again. Edward looked at it; and John showed off the ingenious toy, and said that he would get some wood and teach Edward how it was made, if he would like to learn. The offer was accepted; and for a little while the sorrowing boy's attention was diverted from his grief.

The next day Mrs. Anderson stopped at home to devote herself to her young brother; but the day after, when she went out, Edward summoned the page to attend upon him; and from this time it grew into a habit that a considerable portion of

John's time was devoted to the service and amusement of the invalid.

John, who well understood the love of a mother and a son, felt great pity for his young master, as he called Edward, and made great allowance for his failings, and strove as much as he could to soften his sufferings and make life more bearable to him. Now and then he ventured to call in religion to his aid, and spoke of the duty of resignation to the will of God; and when Edward, in his passionate appeals to his lost mother, called upon her, asking, "why she had left him; why she did not come back to him?" John would say: "Surely, Master Edward, you would not wish to bring your kind, good mother away from such a pleasant place as heaven! She is now there, happy with the Saviour, and the saints, and the angels."

But this appeal was too frequently met with the answer:

"You never knew, John, what it is to lose a mother; if you did, you are not a poor blighted being like me."

Part of John's employment respecting the invalid consisted, on fine days, in drawing him in a wheel-chair about the garden; and when the air was mild Edward would desire to have a game at battledore and shuttlecock, he sitting still, and John of course picking up the shuttlecock whenever it fell. In the same way a game at ball was carried on; and occasionally shooting at a target was practised. But in-door amusements were, generally speaking, more to Edward's taste; and here he found John very useful in the performance of a variety of odd jobs. Sometimes it was to paste papers for screens, card-racks, and other knick-knacks; sometimes to prepare wood to make small picture-frames; sometimes to

cut out the prints of periodicals, for an album, and always to be at hand to pick up anything that was dropped, or to supply any article that was wanted from a distant part of the room.

The consequence of such close attendance upon Edward was, that John's house duties were either neglected, or imperfectly done, and he incurred great displeasure from the footman, who was obliged to supply the page's deficiencies. Certainly, if John had to choose, his attendance upon the young gentleman was pleasanter than housework; but he was made aware by the servants, that if he did not perform the duties of his place, they would complain of him to the master and mistress, and get him discharged. This threat had its due effect, and John strove hard to fill the situation of servant boy in a proper manner, and yet find time to attend on the invalid, to whose comfort he so largely contributed. But with all his efforts he did not escape blame. The footman scolded him respecting his work, and Edward found fault with him because he did not contrive to spend more of his time with him.

His services were particularly valuable to one circumstanced as was the invalid boy, for besides waiting on him, John had something of a mechanical turn, with inventive powers of a rather fanciful order, that enabled him to assist in the contrivance and making of a variety of toys and trifles which, though of no real value, assisted greatly in passing away many an otherwise weary hour. Among other suggestions of John's was the making of a number of (somewhere about six) small kites, which were to be attached to each other at certain distances, and with a larger kite behind, to send them up all at once. They were made of different colours, with large gold-paper eyes, anchors, hearts, and other devices fastened

on them, which were expected to glitter gloriously in the sun. It took some time to accomplish this feat, but when done Edward was all impatience for the time to come when this novelty in kites was to be tried. He called John aside, as he was clearing away the breakfast-things, to beg him to make haste, a promise he readily obtained; but unfortunately there was an unusually large portion of knives, glasses, and silver to be cleaned, owing to a supper-party the night before, so that with every disposition to do as he was asked, it was a long while before he could get through his work; and then, when he had finished all he ought to do, the footman set him about something else which also occupied a long time; and not only that, just as he was running off to Edward he was called back, and told to do over again things which the elder servant declared were not properly attended to, added to which he kept up a ceaseless grumbling at him, finding fault with his manner of doing his work, and taunting him with unpleasant speeches, such as, he wanted to be a gentleman, and that he was not fit for his place, and would never make a good servant. John bore all in silence for a good while; but at last, finding that a great part of what was said was untrue, he grew very angry, and answered accordingly. Luckily the footman was called away at the moment, and a stop was put to the discussion; but the boy's temper was very much ruffled, and he was not in a state to bear patiently the reproaches of Edward for having been so long in coming.

"You know how short the days are now," said Edward, "and we cannot often hope to have such a fine winter's day as this. The sun was so bright in the morning, I could have sat out without taking cold; but now it is quite changed, and the wind, I

think. is gone down. Why would you not come before : you knew how I wanted you ? You could have come sooner if you had liked."

This was too much for John in his present state of mind to bear, and he answered sharply,

"If you are so cross, Master Edward, I will not come at all : you must get some one else to put up ——" he stopped suddenly, for his mistress, whom he was not aware was in the room, came up, and addressing him, said,

"That is a very improper way of speaking, John ; a servant should never forget the respect due to his superiors. I do not defend Edward, for he was wrong to say what he did. You have been kind and obliging to him, and at other times he has spoken well of your forbearance and gentleness. I have no doubt he will be sorry afterwards for what he has said."

"I am sorry now," said Edward ; "but I was so disappointed, I could not help speaking out."

"We must try and not let trifles disturb us," said Mrs. Anderson, looking kindly at the poor afflicted boy. "In this life there is a constant call for patience, and we must endeavour to acquire that valuable virtue."

"I had been trying all I could to get to Master Edward," burst forth John, "but the footman kept setting me things to do, and went on scolding at me when I knew I did not deserve it. And then to have Master Edward tell me I could have come if I would !"

"If you were satisfied, John," said his mistress, "that you did not deserve the blame you incurred, that ought to have kept your mind calm ; but you got angry in the kitchen, and forgot yourself when you came into the parlour. There is no excuse for

a servant ever speaking disrespectfully to those who are above him in station. Difference of station is permitted by God, and each station has its duties. The upper as many, or perhaps more than the lower."

"I will not do so any more," said John, penitently.

"I trust you will not," said Mrs. Anderson; "you must be on your guard, and call to mind all the good instruction you have received. What says your Catechism? You repeated it correctly last Sunday evening when I heard you along with Edward. Does it not tell you 'to order yourself lowly and reverently to all your betters?'"

"Yes, ma'am," said John; "I will mind what you say."

"There will always be the upper and the lower classes," continued Mrs. Anderson. "The upper classes are the 'betters' of the lower, in a worldly point of view: in the eye of God, those are the best who do His will the best; and many a servant who is true and honest, who is not easily provoked, who bridles his tongue, goes into the kingdom of heaven before the man who trusts in his riches."

Some few weeks after Edward had become an inmate of his brother's family, Mrs. Gower fell ill, and her malady kept increasing, till at last her life was in danger. It was a most anxious time for her daughter, and the chief part of every day was passed by her mother's bedside.

But though Mrs. Anderson's time was thus occupied, and she was herself in a state of deep grief, she did not forget the heavy weight of sorrow under which poor Edward was labouring. She regretted that she could now so little minister to his comfort and consolation, and it greatly increased her trouble

that she was compelled to leave him for so many hours alone. It was therefore no small subject of rejoicing when she found that John in a great measure supplied her place in attending to his wants; and that after a time the good temper and pleasant ways of the servant-boy amused and interested her young relative.

After many weeks of painful suspense, Mrs. Gower's disorder took a favourable turn, and she recovered so rapidly that Mrs. Anderson was now enabled to return to her own home duties. During the time that she had been absent, several things had gone wrong which required the presence of a mistress to put right. Among other things, she was not satisfied with the intimacy that had sprung up between Edward and John. Circumstances had at first occurred to make her overlook disadvantages which now, upon reflection, appeared but too evident. The little event just narrated served first to awaken her to a perception that it was not a right state of things. It was not of so much consequence to Edward as to John. The young gentleman could easily have companions found for him in his own sphere of life, who would not only play with and amuse him, but who would raise the tone of his mind, and turn his thoughts to pursuits and occupations fitted for polished society. But with John important mischief might be at work, and as a conscientious person, desirous of the welfare of her servants, she meditated seriously on the subject. John's calling in life was that of a servant, and she considered it was her duty to prevent any hindrances coming in his way to prevent his being a good and thorough one. It seemed to her that John was acquiring tastes which he could never follow with advantage, and which would only serve to make the work of his

station distasteful to him. Had he shown any decided mechanical genius she would gladly have promoted his efforts to rise from the situation in which he was placed ; but on consulting her husband, he agreed with her that there was nothing at all uncommon in the boy's devices and inventions, and that nothing of a really superior order was likely to proceed from him.

Having made up her mind as to what was right, she set about considering the best way of bringing about the necessary separation of the two boys. At first, she hoped that her return would have effected this without any active interference on her part ; for she was now at hand to attend to Edward's wants, and to read or to talk to him, as he had once liked she should. But her power to please and interest him was either gone, or very considerably lessened, and the companionship of John was earnestly besought. "John was so useful to him," he said, "he could do so many things he wanted, and he could join him in so many boy's amusements, and assist him in doing things which were far more entertaining than listening to reading." Mrs. Anderson tried keeping the young servant still more employed in housework, but the consequence of this was, that not having John with him as formerly, Edward became so restless, and often so angry, that it was a difficult thing to soothe and quiet him ; and not unfrequently he would break forth into long and piteous fits of weeping, that made Mrs. Anderson's kind heart ache to witness. Still she felt she had a duty to perform, and again she set about thinking how to effect a right purpose with as little pain as possible. Happily, she received most unexpected assistance in this affair.

Mrs. Lewis, a married sister of Mr. William Anderson's, came on a short visit to "The Elms."



She was on her way with her son from a cold northern county to the south of Devonshire, for the benefit of their health. Master Charles Lewis was about Edward's age, and was a pleasant and good-tempered boy. He became immediately interested in his invalid relation, and Edward, on his side, took a great fancy to him. Charles entered into all Edward's pursuits with great good will; teaching him besides to colour prints, and to play at chess, and he brought forward some newly-invented games which Edward had not yet seen. In short, he was so fully and so agreeably occupied by his new friend, that he no longer needed any of John's attention.

At the end of a week the visitors departed, taking Edward with them. Mrs. Lewis's compassion had been greatly excited by the suffering state of her young brother, added to which he now had a cough, which she thought the mild air of Devonshire would benefit. Edward was delighted at the prospect of a change, and the thought of having Charles for a companion; and he gave directions for the packing of various little treasures he wished to take with him, with a greater air of life and animation than he had shown for a long time past. John assisted mainly in the arrangement of these things, and while thus engaged he could not control some very sorrowful feelings at losing sight of one whose grief he had helped to soothe, and to whose comfort and pleasure he had greatly contributed, and to whom, notwithstanding his frequent bursts of unpleasant temper, he had become attached. John had sufficient good sense to be aware that a young gentleman would naturally supplant him in the regard of his young master; still he hoped that before Edward's final departure he should have received some assurance of

esteem from him, or that he would have shown that past kind services were not quite forgotten. But nothing was said; and even when the last packages were placed by John in the carriage, and it was on the point of moving off, he would have remained unnoticed if his mistress, who was accompanying her friend to the train, had not said something in a low voice to Edward, when he turned round and nodded and said, "Good-bye, John."

On Mrs. Anderson's return, about an hour after, she rang for John to come to her, and he made his appearance with the marks of recent tears on his face. Of this she took no notice, being full well aware of what had caused them.

"John," said she cheerfully, "would you not like a holiday this afternoon to go and see your mother? And you shall take with you a quarter's wages that are due to you."

The cloud cleared away from John's face, and he smiled his thanks.

"You may go early this afternoon," continued his mistress; "your master and I dine out, and you will not be wanted till the evening. Be at home in good time: here is the money for you."

Nothing could have been more grateful and welcome to John than this kindly-timed permission to go and see his mother. He had not seen her nor his sister since he left home to enter service at "The Elms." Both mother and sister received him most joyfully; and he, in the pride and pleasure of presenting his dearly loved mother with his wages, forgot for a time the wound his feelings had received.

Mrs. Hartley was for some time scrupulous about taking her boy's money, but he insisted that she should, declaring that he did not want any of it.

His suits of clothes, he said, were found him, and his shoes were in so good a state they would last a long time.

"Bless your kind heart, my child!" said his mother, "and thank you. Your gift will enable me to pay off the remainder of the doctor's bill, and to make up the rest of the sum due to our landlord; it will remove a load from my mind."

Betsey was in high spirits at the sight of her brother, and she busied herself in preparing tea, bringing forward a little pot of honey a neighbour had given her mother, and a pat of fresh butter which had been presented to herself on taking home some work. "How lucky," exclaimed she, "that John should come the very day when we have such dainties to offer him!"

But John cared little for the treat his sister provided; he could not eat, but bringing a low chair—that which had been his own when he lived at home—he placed it beside his mother, and leaning his head against her, seemed to find a rest for his troubles. And it was not long before he had poured out to her the history of the short, but to him eventful life he had led since he quitted her roof to go out as servant boy in a gentleman's family. He told of the valuable glasses he had broken, of his awkwardness in waiting, of the ridicule he had drawn upon himself from the other servants, of the lazy housemaid, of the dishonest cook, of the unkind behaviour he had experienced from the first set of servants, and now the rough treatment and often uncalled-for severity of the present footman. And last of all he mentioned the coming of Edward into the family, and gave a minute account of all that had passed between the young gentleman and himself. He told how he *had first* pitied the afflicted boy, then waited on him,

and eventually had made himself so useful and pleasant to him, that Edward could not bear to have him long absent. And then came the confession, that whatever had been disagreeable and painful in his place—the scolding and ill-usage of the servants, and his own fretting at his misdeeds—all was nothing to what he felt at the treatment he had received from the invalid.

“I was so patient with him, mother,” cried John; “I felt so grieved for him, and I did so try to please him; and then to have him take no notice of me for days and days before he went away; and then at last not even to say good-bye, if he had not been bid. I did not think he could have been so unkind;” and the boy’s excited feeling found a vent in a violent burst of tears.

Betsey was very indignant at the young gentleman’s ingratitude, as she called it; but Mrs. Hartley, though she soothed and comforted her son with expressions of her own tender love, proceeded to point out to him that his grief was not altogether wise and reasonable. But John’s feelings were at first too little under control to be convinced by what she said.

“I thought he would have been my friend,” cried he.

“Not a friend in the way you think of, my dear,” said Mrs. Hartley; “that could not be expected; no intimacy between a young gentleman and a servant boy could be lasting.”

“But mother,” exclaimed John eagerly, “I have heard you say that a servant is often his master’s friend.”

“I have said so,” replied Mrs. Hartley; “and there are frequent instances where a good master, who has been long and faithfully served, comes to

look upon his servant as a friend; and the master shows his sense of the value of such a friend by promoting his welfare, or by taking care of him in sickness, or providing for him in old age. He does not make a companion of his servant; education has not fitted him for that."

"I used to wish sometimes," said John, after a little pause in the conversation, "when I was sitting in that handsome room with Master Edward, that I had been a young gentleman."

"I do not think, dear John," said his mother, "that you would have been so happy as a young gentleman as a servant boy. All situations are of God's appointment, and it is my firm belief that we are best fitted for, and likely to be happiest in, exactly the state in which we are placed."

"I often was sorry, mother, when I had to leave all I was about in the parlour, to go and do house-work."

"You would like better," said Mrs. Hartley, "to have gone on making the pretty toys that a poor sick boy amused himself with. But if you had been a young gentleman in good health, such as you are now blessed with, you would have led a very different life. You would have had to study hard for many hours in the day. You would have been obliged to learn many very difficult things—several languages, for instance; and then, when you were grown up and wanted to start in a profession—as a doctor, perhaps, or a clergyman, you would have to undergo a very strict examination as to the amount of your learning, and you would not be allowed to practise, or you could not get ordained, unless you could answer correctly the great number of hard questions that would be put to you."

"Indeed, mother!" said John.

"And," continued Mrs. Hartley, "before learning the languages, you would have to get acquainted with other letters than those you now read; there would be other alphabets to learn, and, as I have been told, the grammars of some of these languages are very hard indeed to master. I do not know how you would ever have got on, John, with such difficulties before you, for you used to complain sadly of the short easy lessons in English grammar which were given you to learn."

In this manner Mrs. Hartley, sometimes reasoning with her son, and always listening to what he had to say, quieted his feelings, and at last he seemed to forget all his late vexations in the delight of being again with his mother. He looked round at the home which had sheltered him so long with feelings of contentment to which he had for a great while been a stranger; his spirits rose, he laughed and chatted with his sister, he enquired after the neighbours with interest; and it was not till the time was near at hand for him to go, that he recurred to the subject of which his mind had been so full when he came.

"After all," said Mrs. Hartley, "I do not think that Master Edward meant any unkindness by you, John, dear."

"But mother," replied John, "you said some time ago that young gentlemen and servant boys could not be friends—that is, companions."

"I did so; but that is no reason why young gentlemen should not feel grateful, and express their thanks for the kind attention that has been shown them. And I am inclined to think that it was more want of thought than want of heart that made Master Edward seem to slight you."

"He did not want for feeling," said John, "about

his mother; he was so heart-broken at her loss, that it made my heart ache to hear how he mourned her."

"It has sometimes appeared to me," said Mrs. Hartley, "that young people require to have it pointed out to them what they ought to say on different occasions. Sickly children above all are often so petted, that they are apt to think that nothing is of so much importance as what concerns themselves. Now Master Edward's mind was so filled by all that his new companion said and did for him, together with the pleasant prospect of the journey into Devonshire, that he did not care about anything else for the time. But I am inclined to think, John, that some time hence he will remember you, and feel grateful for all you did for him."

"Do you really think so, mother?" said John.

"Yes, I do," replied Mrs. Hartley; "but I may be mistaken, and if I am, you will still have the satisfaction of reflecting that you strove to lighten the sufferings of a poor afflicted fellow-creature."

Before parting, John told his mother that he highly respected his master, and that his mistress was so kind and good, he felt the greatest regard for her. "You are a fortunate boy," said Mrs. Hartley; "there is not one in a hundred has such a place as you are in. Strive to keep it by doing your duty to the utmost."

It was a bright moonlight evening, with a brisk frost, and John's feet as he ran home rang with a cheerful noise on the hard ground. His heart was lightened of its burden; his mother's blessing was sounding in his ears, his sister's smiling face seemed still before him, and he re-entered "The Elms" perfectly well satisfied to be a servant boy, and with

a firm determination to do his duty as such to the utmost of his power.

The Germans have an excellent proverb—

“Do the good that lies nearest to you.”

And still higher authority says—

“Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might.”

John had often heard these sayings from his mother; and now, as he went about his work, he frequently repeated them to himself.

It may be stated here, that at the end of four or five months Edward returned home from Devonshire, more composed in spirits, and somewhat improved in health. Mrs. Hartley was not wrong in her surmise respecting him; for he took an early opportunity of presenting John with a handsome new prayer-book, saying at the same time something obliging respecting the boy's former kind services.

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## CHAPTER XII.

Mrs. ANDERSON, now that she was at home again much as usual, resumed her good habit of overlooking all the domestic arrangements. The day following that on which the Lewises and Edward had taken their departure, after she had settled about the dinners, she asked the cook if John had conducted himself properly. The cook in answer, said,—

“The boy does very fairly, in my opinion, ma'am; I think better of him than Thomas the footman does; he is always finding fault with John about



something or other, and then very often John answers, and they get to quarrelling, and that does not make the kitchen pleasant."

"I am sure," cried John, who came forward from the pantry at this moment, "it is not my fault. Thomas will not let me alone; do what I will, he is always blaming me."

"I do think," said the cook, "that Thomas is more in fault than the boy. But I will tell you what I think it is, ma'am," continued she, lowering her voice so as not to be heard by John, "Thomas is jealous of the boy's being so much in the parlour, and he will have it, that in consequence his work is never properly done."

"A stop is put to that now," said Mrs. Anderson, "by Master Edward's going away; I hope that now things will go on pleasanter in the kitchen." Then addressing John, she said, "I cannot allow of disputes and disagreements between any of my servants. It is your duty to be patient and humble, and do not allow yourself to give angry answers, however much you may think yourself aggrieved. Remember, 'a mild answer turneth away wrath;' besides, it is very unbecoming and quite out of character that you, almost a child, should speak in a disrespectful and angry manner to an upper servant, and one, too, who is so much your elder, as Thomas is."

John listened with all due humility to this reproof from his mistress, and promised to conduct himself with more propriety for the future. At the same time, it must be owned that some rather rebellious thoughts arose in his mind, suggesting that Thomas was much more in fault than himself. But this feeling was short-lived, for as he stood by himself,

rubbing his spoons, after Mrs. Anderson had left the kitchen, his mother's often-repeated words came into his mind, namely, "that our share in any wrong conduct rests upon ourselves, and we are not to consider that we are less blameable because others have done worse than we have."

Mrs. Anderson certainly was of the same opinion with her young servant, that in the disputes that disturbed the peace of the kitchen, Thomas was the greatest delinquent; but she did not think fit to say so, for she thought as Mrs. Hartley did on such subjects; besides, she was well satisfied to have the opportunity of exercising John in that most valuable quality in a servant, the power of hearing unjust blame without answering at the time. But as this amiable lady looked upon her servants as beings under her especial care and guidance, she was most desirous to act not only justly but kindly by them. In consequence of this feeling, she took an opportunity of speaking to John alone. She assured him, that in all her dealings with him she had his welfare at heart, and she felt as desirous to have him turn out well as if he had been a younger brother of her own. She said that in all situations of life there was something to put up with; but it was well to consider if our present evils were not less than those a change of circumstances might bring about. It was her advice, she said, and it had been that of more experienced housekeepers than herself to all young servants, to endeavour to remain at least a year in their first place. To go from thence with a good character was generally a passport to a second respectable place. She then added, that at the same time all were free to leave a situation at any time if they did not like it, and also that every servant had

the power of respectfully stating to the mistress any injustice or wrong that he had to suffer, and if such complaints were just, she would inquire into them, and effect a change.

John thought it very kind and good of his mistress to speak thus to him; and he assured her with truth, that as long as she was willing to keep him he should never wish to quit her service.

Thomas had so got the habit of fault-finding that it seemed for some time as though he could not leave it off, even when John gave no cause for complaint. But John resolutely restrained his tongue from the liberty he had formerly given it, and he tried to do properly all that was required of him. This behaviour of his, and his being no longer a visitor in the parlour, at length took effect, and the footman, finding that there was really no good reason for displeasure, suffered the boy to remain in peace.

By the end of John's first year of service at "The Elms" he was much improved. He was quick and active, and his tread was light. He acquitted himself well in the dining-room, his housework was well and regularly performed, and he was a careful and handy attendant upon his mistress in her drives. He was a good deal grown, and the upright manner in which he held himself gave him the appearance of being tall for his age. The cook and footman remained in their places, but at Michaelmas there came a new housemaid, and with her came a new set of trials for John. Alice, that was her name, was eighteen years of age, quite old enough to conduct herself better than she did. It was not that she performed the duties of her situation amiss, but she was giddy and restless, and was constantly in want of excitement of some sort or other. After she had been in her place a few days, she told John *that she had taken a great liking to him; and a little*

while after, she endeavoured to make him go to play with her. She did not exactly ask him to do so, but she made many efforts to have what she called a "little fun;" for instance, she would snatch a thing out of his hand and run off with it, and then just holding it out to him and then drawing it back, try to entice him to come after it. Then she would jump down some of the back stairs and say he could not jump so far; and many things of a similar kind she essayed in order to provoke him to play.

The boy was of that age when a game at play is most inviting, and he might perhaps have followed in Alice's lead, if his mother had not most earnestly warned him against everything of the kind.

Finding all the efforts to derive amusement from John in this way of no avail, she determined to entertain herself by practising a number of petty annoyances on him. She would pull him by the sleeve when carrying a dish into the dining-room, at the risk of causing him to spill the contents, making the excuse that he had taken it up before the cook had got it ready to send in. She would hide a silver fork or spoon, and occasion him loss of time in looking for it, and much distress at the idea that he had lost it. She would put his gloves where he could not find them, and give him the trouble of hunting for them, with the chance of being too late to attend his mistress in her drives. But above all, a favourite trick with her was to make him leave his work, under pretence that his mistress wanted him. This she accomplished by ringing his bell, and she always chose those times when he was engaged in jobs that necessarily dirtied his hands and required him to wear a coarse apron to protect his clothes from soil. He therefore took some little time to render himself fit to appear in the parlour; and while he was washing his hands, throwing off his apron, and slipping

on his jacket, she would ring still louder, and then come forward and ask if he did not hear how he was being rung for. One day she performed this feat three times in the short space of half an hour. It so happened that on that morning Mr. Anderson, not being very well, had stayed at home from the bank, employing himself in looking over some rather troublesome accounts, at the same time getting his wife to assist him. Twice John went into the room where they were sitting, and was told that they had not rung; but on the third time his mistress, who was disturbed by these frequent interruptions, said, in a somewhat displeased tone,—

“I wish, John, you would be at the pains to know if you really are rung for or not.”

Alice, who was on the watch, was so well pleased to see by the boy's countenance, as he left the parlour, that she had “got him into trouble,” that she determined to try her trick on him once more, and as soon as he had resumed his work she rang, and still louder than before. But this time John, who began to suspect that he was being imposed on, did not stop to alter his dress, but hastened into the kitchen, and was just in time to see the skirt of Alice's dress vanishing through an opposite door, at the same time that the kitchen poker fell heavily on the floor. This confirmed him in his opinion that a trick had been played upon him, and he felt indignant that he had been made to appear troublesome to his master and mistress at a time when they were wishing to be undisturbed.

Alice had a misgiving that she was found out, and if indeed she was, she settled not to appear to care in the least for what she had done. She was obliged, however, to alter her tone, for John was thoroughly roused, and spoke in strong terms of

displeasure to her; and ended by saying that he would acquaint his mistress with her behaviour. This threat frightened her, and she entreated him not to tell, and she seemed so much distressed at the thought that he would, that he promised not, though he said he did not at like to have been considered troublesome without being able to explain the cause of his conduct.

"I do wish, Alice," said he, in the course of the same day, "that you would leave off your teasing ways."

"I do not know what you mean by teasing ways," replied she, in no very pleasant manner; "it is very hard if one may not have a joke now and then. I never was in such a dull place in my life; and as to you, you are very different from the Honourable Mrs. Bertram's page: *he* was a good-natured, pleasant lad, and always willing to do what I asked."

"I am sure," said John, "I am always ready to do anything reasonable for you; I always carry the coal-scuttles into the rooms when you ask me, or fill you a pail of water whenever you want it."

Alice could not deny this; but not being in a good humour, she broke out again into praise of the other page, and a number of advantages that were met with in her last place.

"It is a pity," said the cook, who happened to be by, "that you left so excellent a place as the Honourable Mrs. Bertram's. Why did you come away, pray?"

Alice, who suspected that the cook knew why she had been discharged, namely, for want of steadiness, coloured, but did not reply.

After the circumstance just related, Alice was forced, though very unwillingly, to cease her troublesome interruptions to John, for on her attempting

once or twice to repeat her jokes, as she called them, he declared so positively that he would acquaint the mistress with her behaviour, that she was obliged to believe him in earnest, and that he really would, as he said, expose her objectionable conduct.

But John was not to be left in peace. It seemed as though Alice could not let him remain quiet. Seeing that she must give up teasing him, she changed her manner, and became gentle and complaining. She said her place was too hard for her, and under the plea of being either unwell or tired she got him to perform numberless little offices for her, which he in his good nature did not refuse.

One day the cook, on going into John's pantry, found Alice there, and he engaged in helping Alice pull on a pair of tight gloves. The cook made no remark then, but the first time that she was alone with John, she said,—

"Don't you help Alice pull on her gloves any more."

John replied that he would not, after her wrist was well.

"Her wrist!" repeated the cook; "what is the matter with that?"

"She says she has sprained it," answered John.

"Pshaw, nonsense!" exclaimed the cook; "her wrist is no more sprained than mine is. It is all laziness; she is always after you to do something or other for her. Very soon she will be wanting you to cut up her food and feed her."

At this last observation John felt inclined to laugh, but he restrained himself, seeing that the cook was very much in earnest in what she was saying.

"Don't you wait on the maid-servants," continued she, "except it may be to help them carry anything

that may be too heavy for them, or to fetch in what they may want when it rains, or things of that sort. There were you the other day helping Alice on with her shawl: let her put her shawl on herself; or if she must have help, there is me; I can assist her. Great boys like you have something better to do with their time than attending upon the maids. I am not a young woman now, and I have seen a good deal of life, and I never saw any benefit arising from that sort of thing; on the contrary, I have known harm come of it. Foolish idle girls will, I am sorry to say it, but it is the truth, often put things into a boy's head which he had much better never have listened to. Now, John, mark my words: it is best for boys to keep themselves to themselves, and best for maid-servants not to interfere with them."

John willingly followed this good advice of the cook's, and the more so from having often found it very troublesome to be taken off his work to do Alice's biddings. He had, however, to bear a good deal of ill humour from her, and to frequently hear himself called sullen, disobliging, and rude.

Alice had been in her place about three months, when she asked her mistress one day to let her have a holiday to go home, as a brother who had been a long time away was come on a visit to their mother. Mrs. Anderson gave her consent, and told Alice she might go as early as she liked in the afternoon, but that she should require her to be back at eight o'clock in the evening.

As Alice was setting out she called John aside, and in a coaxing manner asked him to let her in at night.

John replied, that as she was to be at home at eight o'clock she could let herself in, as the gate would not then be fastened.



"But if I should be after the time," said Alice, "you will let me in, will you not?"

"But you ought not to be after your time," said John.

"Now, John," said Alice, "you don't think that when I am going out for a holiday, the first I have had since I came to live at this stupid place, that I can possibly be at home so early as eight?"

"It is not early," said John; "mother would not let our Betsey be out so late as that, even."

"Why, John," exclaimed Alice, "the friends we expect will hardly be got to our house by that time, and you know I have nearly upon two miles to walk. Can any one in reason expect me to be back at eight o'clock?"

"You had better not go, then," said John.

"Not go!" exclaimed Alice, "when there is to be a party, and brother Tom at home, whom I have not seen for ages!" Then, resuming her coaxing tone and manner, she said, "now, there is a good, kind lad, just do what I ask you. Your bedroom is right over against the back gate, and you could run down in a minute to let me in. I would shake the gate, and then you would know I was there. Pray do what I ask; you have been very cross and disobliging of late, but I will forgive all if——"

"I will be no party to any sort of secret," said John, firmly.

"Why, what can be the harm?" asked Alice. "Mistress never wants me at night; and it can make no possible difference to her what time I come back as long as I am up in the morning and do my work."

"But you ought to obey orders," said John.

"Very well, very well; don't preach," and off she ran.

John concluded, that, notwithstanding what Alice said, she would never dare to stay later than she had been bid. But in this supposition he was mistaken; nine, ten, and even eleven o'clock came, and she did not return. The cook sat up for her till past the last-named hour, and then went to bed, concluding that the ill-conducted young woman intended remaining out all night. John she had sent off to his room before nine o'clock; there had been no family prayers that night, for Mr. Anderson had gone from home on business, and was not expected back till the next day, and Mrs. Anderson had retired early in the evening, having a bad headache.

At midnight John awoke; he knew that was the time, by the hall clock striking twelve. He was drowsily composing himself again to sleep, half wondering at so unusual a circumstance as his waking in the night, when a shower, like that of hail, fell against his window; he listened, and the noise, whatever it might be, was repeated. He started up in his bed, and then heard a rattling of the outer gate, which recalled to his recollection Alice, and what had passed on the subject of letting her in, in case she was beyond her time. He went to the window and looked out: the night was very dark, but he thought he discovered two figures standing outside the gate. Another shower of gravel fell against the window, which he now opened, and called out to know who was there.

"Oh, John, John!" exclaimed Alice, for it was indeed she, "I thought we never should wake you. Make haste down, and let me in."

"I do not know whether I ought to do so," replied the boy.

"Not let me in!" exclaimed Alice; "why, what can you mean? Why, I should lose my character

for a place if I stopped out all night without leave. Oh ! do make haste, for it is beginning to rain, and my best bonnet will be spoilt." Then turning to a young man by her side, she said, " Good night, brother Tom, run off, or you will be wet through before you get home."

John thought it very odd Alice should be thinking of her bonnet at a time when she had been doing so very wrong. He reflected a few moments as to what it was right for him to do, and he decided to let Alice in, especially as her brother had now left her. Therefore, partly dressing himself, he got a light, found the key of the gate, and went out and opened it. She lost not a moment in making good her entrance, and brushing by John, caught up his light, and disappeared up-stairs, leaving him to bolt and bar the entrances, and find his way back to his bed as he best could in the dark.

Alice had hoped to keep her late return a secret, but had there not been John to talk indignantly of her bad conduct, the cook was aware of the hour she got back, and in the morning mentioned the circumstance, as was her duty, to her mistress.

Mrs. Anderson was exceedingly displeased at the conduct of the young woman, and, after talking seriously to her on the subject, said that she could not retain her in her service, and that at the end of the month she must go. Alice had no idea that her fault would be regarded in so serious a light ; and now that her pleasure was over, she sorely repented of her behaviour. She begged her mistress, with tears, to give her another trial, and declared most positively that she would never offend in the same way again. Like many foolish people who do wrong, she began making excuses for her ill conduct. She said she had not seen her brother for a long while,

and there were one or two most particular friends at her mother's, and the time slipped away faster than she had any idea of, and then the clock stopped, and it was only half-past nine by it when she got up to come away.

Mrs. Anderson reminded her that eight o'clock was the hour that she had been desired to be at home, upon which Alice muttered something about not knowing that it was necessary to be so very exact to the time.

"Obedience to orders, Alice, is one of a servant's first duties," said Mrs. Anderson, who then inquired who the party at home consisted of, and how they employed themselves, charitably thinking that perhaps something might be said to make her take a rather more favourable view of the matter. The answers Alice gave were so far satisfactory, that her mistress was induced to drive that morning to Mrs. Hopkins, Alice's mother, and find out if the statements of the young woman were true. They proved on inquiry to be so; and it further appeared that Alice had not said that she had been desired to return home at eight o'clock. When Mrs. Hopkins, who was a very respectable woman, heard that such had been Alice's orders, she expressed much displeasure at her daughter's conduct; at the same time, she pleaded so hard for her to be forgiven, that Mrs. Anderson kindly consented to revoke the warning she had given the young woman, and allow her to remain in her place.

Alice felt very thankful for this indulgence, and for some few days after her visit home she continued cheerful, and went about her work as though it was a pleasure to do it. But this good disposition did not last, for she returned to her restless ways and to perpetual complaints of the dullness of her place.

The servants at "The Elms" always had some time to themselves after tea and before prayers. John then always took the opportunity of reading a chapter in the Bible, and the cook, who did needle-work at that hour, used to like to hear him read aloud. One evening, just after he had seated himself, according to custom, and had opened his book, Alice called out,—

"It's enough to drive a girl crazy, such humdrum evenings. Why can't you read something amusing, John? Here, take and read some of these," and she drew a song-book out of her pocket, and held it out to the boy. The cook laid hold of it before it reached his hand, and after turning the pages over and reading in it for a few minutes, she coolly threw it into the fire.

"Oh, what are you about?" exclaimed Alice. "What can you mean by burning my beautiful song-book? There is not the least harm in it."

"Is there the least good in it?" asked the cook, and she went on working, quite indifferent to Alice's anger.

When at last Alice's displeasure was sufficiently abated to allow of any voice besides her own being heard, John said,

"If you like, Alice, when I have finished my chapter, I will read from a very entertaining book to you. It is one that my sister had given her as a prize when she left school."

"Some canting work or other, no doubt," said Alice, with a sneer; "thank you, you may keep such to yourself."

"It is the history of a young housemaid, and I am sure you would like it very much," said John, good-naturedly, taking no notice of her disagreeable remark.

"Well, you may begin it, if you like; I am not obliged to listen if it does not please me." She went to fetch her work, with which, as soon as John had closed his Bible, she sat down to the table, turning her back as much as possible on the cook.

The tale was a very interesting one, well and powerfully written. It was the history of the work, trials, and temptations of a young woman in service in a family who were careless, worldly-minded people, and who took no thought for their own salvation nor for that of their servants. The young woman herself had been well and religiously brought up by her mother, and however at times she erred, and more than once had been on the point of going wholly wrong, the good principles in which she had been trained came to her rescue, and triumphing over all difficulties, she ended by becoming a highly conscientious and truly estimable member of society.

The time allotted for reading only allowed of half the tale being gone through, and Alice, contrary to her expectation, became so deeply interested in it that she begged John to go on with it after family prayers were over. He, however, said that he must go to bed; and besides, it was against rules to sit up after their master and mistress had dismissed them for the night. She then begged him to let her have the book to finish to herself up-stairs in her room.

"No, Alice," said the cook; "even you, I think, would not be guilty of such misconduct. Call to mind the order mistress gave you on first coming, 'never to burn a light in your room longer than was necessary for getting to bed.'"

"Very well," said Alice, "I give in; I must try and be like good Jane in John's book, and obey orders."

"That is very well spoken," said the cook, "and there will be now something pleasant to look forward to to-morrow night."

The story was finished by John, but it was not once hearing it that satisfied Alice. Again and again she begged him to read to her parts or the whole. It took strong hold upon her mind, and she was gradually induced by it to abandon her foolish, flighty ways, and to follow the example of steadiness and good conduct set forth in it.

As Alice will not again be mentioned in this history, it will be gratifying here to state that she eventually became a steady, well-disposed person; and while she remained in service she acquitted herself with benefit to her employers and credit to herself.

In after-life she was often heard to say to her husband, "I will endeavour all I can to bring up our boys to resemble John Hartley, the lad who lived fellow-servant with me at Mr. Anderson's, the banker. I do believe I owe my change of character to his grave ways and refusal to give in to my follies, and also to the good advice contained in a book he persisted in reading to me, notwithstanding my ill temper."

This shows that there is no person, not even a little servant boy, who may not do some good to a fellow-creature. There is not a single word we utter, nor an action that we perform, that has not its influence for good or for evil. This is a serious reflection. John, by his good conduct while living under the same roof with Alice, induced her to follow his example, and she became a changed character.

' Could wealth, fame, or honours have been heaped

upon John, of what little value would they have been in comparison with this plain fact, that, under Providence, he had been the instrument for waking an immortal soul to thoughts of its eternal welfare!

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### CHAPTER XIII.

AT the end of John's second year of service at "The Elms," two most important events occurred. The first in order was the death of his mother. The illness through which he had so dutifully and affectionately nursed her laid the foundation of a complaint which prematurely ended her days. John deeply lamented her loss, not only as a tender parent to whom he could confide all his joys and his sorrows, but as a judicious friend and counsellor to whom he could look for advice in all his difficulties. Great, however, as was his own grief, he mourned the death of his mother even more on his sister's account than on his own, for by this loss she was deprived of a home where she had lived in ease and comfort. Betsey was not a strong girl, and she must now go out among strangers to provide herself with a living.

The other event which so greatly concerned John, was having to leave his excellent place at "The Elms." The eldest Mr. Anderson did not long survive the loss of his wife, and on the death of his father, Mr. William took a man into partnership, who appropriated large sums of money to his own use, and very nearly involved the concern in ruin. Fortunately his villany was discovered in time to



prevent so sad a catastrophe, but it needed the utmost vigilance and economy to bring things round. In order to do this the more effectually, Mr. Anderson, with the concurrence and assistance of his wife, retrenched all their expenses. They gave up their house, parted with their servants, and went into humble lodgings. By acting thus prudently and honourably, the creditors' demands were all in time paid, and the bank again flourished, as will appear hereafter.

John was very sorry to leave such a kind master and mistress, and said he was certain he should never again find any whom he so much loved and respected. He did not look out immediately for another place, but went home to his sister for a time. The orphans needed the consolation under their heavy affliction of being together a little while. Besides, John would be at hand to help dispose of their poor mother's little effects. There were a few weeks remaining to complete the half-year, which the brother and sister could employ in looking out for suitable situations, to which they would have to go when the time for separation arrived. The money for the rent was all ready, Mrs. Hartley having, according to her prudent custom, laid it by. John had part of his wages remaining, and this served for the maintenance of himself and sister. The little money that the sale of the furniture produced was employed in fitting out Betsey for going to service.

A lady who had known and respected Mrs. Hartley, for her sake took Betsey to live with her, promising to be kind to the young girl, and to train her up to be a useful servant. This was a great relief to John's mind, for his sister was much beloved by him, and he had felt very anxious as to her future prospects. He himself was not long before hearing

of a situation as page in a gentleman's family; and thinking he was now duly qualified to fill it, he went after it and was hired. His late master, Mr. Anderson, gave him an excellent character. John went to thank him, and to take a final leave of his former employers. Both Mr. and Mrs. Anderson took great interest in the boy, and, anxious for his future welfare, they gave him a few words of friendly advice before parting.

"I have given you a very good character, John," said Mr. Anderson, "and I trust you will do your best to maintain it. To do right is now, I trust, a fixed principle in your mind; but be careful not to be led astray. Trials and temptations which you did not meet with in my situation may await you in the one you are now going to. Be firm."

John listened with deference, and promised to attend to all that was said; though at the same time he felt so strong in his own integrity, that he thought the advice he received was not at all needed. He had better have doubted himself, and entered on his new situation with humility, and a determination to watch himself.

Mr. Beaumont and his lady, John's new employers, bore but little resemblance to his late master and mistress. They were what the world would call easy-going people, fond of pleasure, and disliking trouble. The servants, generally speaking, liked their places, for there was no very hard work, and those they served were not difficult to please. The first thing that struck John on coming was the extravagance and needless waste that pervaded all the kitchen-department. Mrs. Beaumont was not, like Mrs. Anderson, her own housekeeper; the cook combined that office with her own especial one. The regularity and proper economy to which

John had been accustomed, made what he now saw absolutely painful to him. He thought his mistress could not possibly be aware of how things were managed, and he considered it would be his positive duty to acquaint her.

Mrs. Beaumont drove a pair of beautiful spirited ponies, of which she was very fond, and she not a little proud of her own dashing, daring manner of driving. John, in his character of page, she chose for her usual attendant, and it was only at those times that he saw her alone; but he almost despaired of finding a fitting opportunity for making the communication he desired, and which he thought would entitle him to his mistress's grateful thanks. At last, one day, after several miles of hard driving, the lady pulled up at a hill. It was a steep one, or she would not have done so, as she "never suffered her nags," she said, "to be lazy." John thought it would be humane to offer to get down and walk up the hill; but he was bid to sit still.

"Walk? what should you walk for?" exclaimed his mistress; "perhaps you will think next my ponies will want to be carried." And the lady laughed at her own wit. "Tired," said she, as she made a caressing motion with her whip on the glossy coats of her favourites; "tired, you don't know what that is, do you? So, so, Star, gently; pull even, Diamond. That's it, my beauties. That's right; you might have a silver arrow laid across your pretty necks and it would not fall."

All this time John was in a state of considerable agitation. His mistress was so absorbed in the contemplation of her ponies that he felt it would be difficult to gain her attention; still, if he did not seize this opportunity, he considered it might be

long before he had another. He therefore resolutely rushed into the subject.

"If you please, ma'am," he began, "I wish to speak to you—may I?"

"Speak on," said his mistress.

"I wish to tell you, ma'am," continued the boy, "that is, I think I ought to inform you, that there is a great deal of waste in your kitchen."

Mrs. Beaumont turned on John a look of mingled pity and surprise; pity at the ignorance of a young rustic, as she considered him, and surprise at his assurance in addressing her as he had.

"Hark ye, my lad," said she, "you do tolerably well as a page, but don't set yourself up to be better than others. Mind your own business, and don't interfere with what does not concern you."

John was effectually silenced, while a feeling of mortification at the way his well-meant caution was received mingled with his astonishment at the perfect indifference his mistress showed to the wanton waste of her property. It was, however, well for him that Mrs. Beaumont forgot almost as soon as she heard what he had said, for had it been known among the servants that he had told of their extravagance, it might have caused him to lead a very unpleasant life. As it was, he became a great favourite with them; and he in his turn was very well pleased with their notice, and, as will be easily supposed after what had passed between himself and his mistress, he attempted no remonstrance respecting their reckless waste and extravagance. Unfortunately, he began after a time to get accustomed to it, and too soon grew indifferent to what had appeared to give no one any concern but himself.

John's pleasant manners, and readiness to oblige,

were calculated to win him favour; but he had a double advantage in coming immediately after a rough ill-tempered lad, who had been discharged for his awkwardness. John's upright carriage, and quick, light step, were much commended; and one day he was asked by one of the women-servants how he learned to hold himself so well. This drew forth an account from the boy of how he had watched a sergeant drilling soldiers, and how he had learned and practised all he saw. And then he performed some of the exercises, which were much applauded, and his diligence and perseverance commended. He gained still further ground in the estimation of his fellow-servants, by bringing into use some of his farm experience. The butter, he said, was not well made, and to the edification of the dairy-maid, and the high amusement of the other servants, he gave a practical lesson in the art of butter-making, by which the said article was decidedly improved. He next suggested an alteration in the food used for fattening poultry, which proved so advantageous that the cook declared the chickens thus fed were the most delicate she had ever seen. But the feat that most completely won the cook's heart was his carving out of turnips and carrots some flowers for her to garnish with one day when there was a grand dinner-party. He had always been skilful in the use of his knife, and the imitation of flowers he now produced was very pretty and tasteful. The cook was charmed with such ornaments for her dishes, and, with the other servants, was loud in her commendation of them. John was quite elated with this praise, and became still more so on hearing, when waiting at table, a lady who sat next Mr. Beaumont laughingly remark that he ought to send those flowers to try for a prize at the next flower-show.

The cook understood her business well, and used to pride herself in sending up her dinners in excellent style; still she had a fault not uncommon among that class of servants, namely, the not beginning her preparations soon enough, so that when the time came for serving up, she was too often behindhand, and at the last moment got into an unpleasant hurry, getting heated herself, and sharp and irritable to those about her. At such times John would frequently come to her aid, and this in a very pleasant manner, not asking questions as to what he should do, but observing what was wanted and getting it. He would move her saucepans for her, and set out the dishes as she required them, or do many little nameless things which, by saving time, were of real assistance.

The cook was not unmindful of these good-natured services of John's, and rewarded him with many little tempting morsels, and a larger supply of sweets than usually fall to the share of a servant boy. In short, he was in high favour with the head of the kitchen department. Far too much so for the benefit of his character; for, besides all this petting, he unluckily overheard the cook speaking one day in exaggerated terms in his praise. A part of what she said was undoubtedly true, for he was intelligent and obliging; but he was far from meriting the highly flattering way in which he was commended. And this, however it might please him, he felt in his heart to be true. He could not forget the lessons of humility that had been taught him. Still, flattery is a subtle poison, and will find its way into an unguarded heart. Everything was now going smoothly and pleasantly with John. It has been wisely said that prosperity is often harder to bear well than adversity. When John was suffering from

injustice at his last place, he reflected that he was under a state of trial, and watched that he might conduct himself properly; now pleasure made him careless, and the encomiums that were passed upon him began to have their weight, and at last he began to think himself a person of importance, gave himself airs, and was fast becoming that most insufferable of persons, a self-sufficient servant boy. Strange to say, this change was most apparent where his services had hitherto been the most valuable, that is, in the assistance he had afforded the cook. It seemed as though he wished to impress her with the idea that he was conferring a very considerable favour whenever he lent her his aid. He no longer flew to her side, cheerful and willing to supply the needful thing, or do at the moment what was most wanted. He often suffered her to call to him before he would stir, and then he would look up from a newspaper he might perhaps be reading, cast his eyes again over it before laying it leisurely down, then marching up, inquire with a consequential air what was required of him.

During all the time that this change was taking place in John's character, where was his sister? She was living and doing well in the place she went to on the death of her mother. She had a kind and watchful mistress, in whose small establishment she was free from many of the temptations that befel her brother. Had it been otherwise, it is probable that she would have made a better stand against them than he did, for she was in some respects of a firmer character. She often thought of him, and longed to see him, and at last this wish became so strong that she asked leave to go and pay him a visit. They were not more than twenty miles apart, still both being in service they had had no opportunity of

seeing each other for more than six months. Betsey obtained the desired permission, and one fine morning she set off for Belmont, Mr. Beaumont's place, with a present of money to pay the expense of her journey, and leave to stay till the next day, if suitable accommodation could be found her.

John was delighted to see his sister, and after the melancholy satisfaction of talking for a time of their mother, calling to mind her many virtues, and her tender love for her children, the brother and sister enjoyed being together very much. But after the first two or three hours, Betsey became conscious of a change in her brother. She could not tell in what the difference consisted, but he certainly did not appear quite the brother she used to know and love so dearly. Looking, too, earnestly into his face, his countenance did not seem to wear the frank, open expression it used. He was called away to drive out with his mistress, and during his absence Betsey set herself to consider if there really was a change in him, or that what she felt she did not altogether like might only be her fancy. Pondering the matter well over, things recurred to her mind which he had said during the short time they had been together, which struck her on reflection as not being quite right. Perhaps it was that he found fault with things in his place, which it appeared to her he was not warranted in doing—she could not tell. She was impatient for him to return, that she might talk to him again, and find out whether he really was wrong, or whether the fault existed in her imagination. The day, however, passed without her obtaining an opportunity for any private conversation, and it was not till night, when she followed him to his room, that she was alone with him. Mrs. Beaumont made no objection to her servants having their rela-



tives to visit them, therefore accommodation was afforded for Betsey's sleeping at Belmont.

The first remark she made when she and John were shut into his room alone, was that to her great surprise the servants had not been called in to family prayers before retiring for the night. Finding that this was always the case, she asked her brother if he did not feel the loss of the good custom. He replied, that at first he had. Betsey said her mistress always read prayers morning and evening, and added that she should not like to live where the family did not assemble for public worship, for it was such a happiness to know that where two or three were gathered together in Christ's name, there was He in the midst.

"And," added she, "we can, as mother used to say, pour out our hearts afterwards in private to God, confess our sins, and ask Him for those things of which we stand in need. This, John, dear, you can always do."

As his sister thus spoke, a deep blush overspread John's face as he thought how carelessly he now often said his prayers, and that even when very tired he had occasionally neglected them altogether.

"This is a very worldly-minded family I am living in now," said he; "no one seems to think of serious things."

"But that need not affect you, John, dear," said his sister, who had not failed to observe his embarrassed look when she talked of his prayers. "And perhaps if the servants saw how earnest you are in religious matters, they would be led to follow your example. There is that young footman, Stephen, I should think he would make a nice companion for you in your devotions. He does not seem much older than you, and——"

"He is two-and-twenty," said John, interrupting her; "he is a disagreeable fellow, and I would not have anything to do with him if he was only half that age. What do you think now? why, he asked me the other morning to clean his boots. I told him he might clean them himself, or wear them dirty, I was not going to do it—I hate him."

"Oh, John," exclaimed Betsey, "surely you don't mean what you say!"

"Why, not quite," said he, smiling; "but Stephen makes himself very disagreeable. You see, the thing is he is jealous of me, for he is not such a favourite with the other servants as I am."

"That might lead you to make allowance for him, might it not?" said Betsey; "and really, dear, I don't think there is anything so very bad in his having asked you to clean his boots. At Mrs. Anderson's, I know you often used to oblige the servants by doing such things for them."

There was a little pause in the conversation, and then John said, "I do not know how it is, Betsey, but I don't think I am altogether so happy here as I was at 'The Elms.' I cannot tell why, for I have less work to do, and the servants all treat me well; and when I lived at the Andersons', I am sure I was often very much teased, not to say hardly used, by the footman, and sometimes by the housemaid."

"If poor mother was alive," said Betsey, "she would tell you how all that is. You certainly were often very uncomfortable at 'The Elms,' and here you say all goes smoothly with you. Perhaps——" she hesitated, as if she feared what she had in her mind to say might displease her brother.

"Speak on," said he; "I don't mind your finding fault with me."

"I was not going to find fault," replied Betsey,

"and I am far from wishing to set myself up to know better than you. I am not much more than a child yet, still I have heard so much said about having our hearts right towards God, that it has made me think a great deal on the subject; and I am sure we ought, as we go about our daily work, to have it constantly in our minds whether our words or actions are such as please Him. We should be poor creatures if God did not love and protect us, and we ought to try and please Him, if it was only to show our gratitude."

"You think, then," said John, "that I am not so happy as I was, because I am less religious. But I never told you that was the case."

"No, certainly you did not," replied his sister; "but I cannot help thinking that is the reason you are less happy here than at 'The Elms;' for, as you tell me, you are well off, and——"

The conversation was here put a stop to by one of the maids coming for Betsey to go to bed, and there was no opportunity for resuming it, as the young girl had to return home before John had any leisure time to talk privately with her again.

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## CHAPTER XIV.

THIS visit of his sister's, and the short conversation he had with her on the state of his mind, seemed to revive some of John's better feelings, which for a time had slumbered. The sight, too, of her awakened thoughts of his home, his mother, and his happy childhood, and he experienced a great wish to set aright, and to feel again as he used formerly. But

he was in a perilous position: he was living at ease, flattered and caressed, and surrounded by those whose example was injurious. If he had courageously set about examining himself, to find out in what the difference consisted in his present and past state of mind, had he reflected whether such and such words and actions were acceptable in the sight of God, and whether vanity and love of praise were not his uppermost thoughts, he would have done well. But this was a work he shrunk from performing, and each day as it passed his good impressions became less and less, till he relapsed into the careless state from which he had been for a time aroused.

It must not, however, be imagined from what has been said, that John was a depraved or wicked boy—far from it. Had it been proposed to him to commit any great sin, he would have shrunk appalled from the bare thought of it. No; at present his faults were venial; but who could say that they would continue so? No one. The course of life he was pursuing had a downward tendency, and would, unless he became aware of his danger, bear him on and on till his conscience got hardened, and the integrity of his mind was either lost or very much weakened.

Stephen the footman, who has been spoken of, had been but a short time at Belmont at the period of Betsey's visit. From the first he seemed little disposed to like John, and this feeling, instead of diminishing, on further acquaintance appeared to increase. To John, Stephen was an object of indifference, till he began to give outward tokens of animosity towards him.

Previous to coming to Belmont, Stephen had been living for some few years in a family where the manners and address of a servant were of little im-

portance, provided that he was honest and diligent. These latter qualities Stephen possessed ; and as he entered his new place with a very good character from his last, he was surprised at perceiving how little favour he found with his fellow-servants. Unfortunately, he was of a jealous and envious disposition, added to which he had many awkward ways, and a slouching gait, which were far from prepossessing. The estimation in which John appeared to be held by all the other servants, roused the unamiable parts of his character, and he conceived a strong prejudice against the boy, because he possessed the very qualities in which he himself was deficient.

An observation of one of the maids served to bring out still more in Stephen's heart these injurious feelings : she said to him one day, after remarking upon the slovenly way in which he dressed himself,

" You should take pattern by John ; it would be much to your advantage to do so."

John had been trained to habits of great neatness and cleanliness, and it would have been painful to him not to have kept to them.

Certainly, when he made his appearance prepared to wait at table, with his clean bright hair smoothly brushed, his clothes without a spot upon them, his necktie neatly put on, together with his upright carriage, the contrast between the page and the footman was very striking. Stephen at these times frequently took occasion to say taunting things to John, such as,

" How much of your wages do you spend in oil and hair-brushes ?" " It must take you a pretty long spell at the looking-glass to get your hair into that trim." " You don't trouble yourself about much work, I should suppose, to keep your clothes in that

dandy style." "Why, I dare say you think you are fit to sit down to dinner with your master. Come, now, own you would like to be a gentleman."

To all of which John at first would reply, "I never neglect my hair so that it gets dirty, therefore a very short time is enough to put it into good order. And I can do that as well without a glass as with. Then it takes no more time to put one's clothes on well than ill. As to wishing to sit at my master's table, I know I am quite unfit for such a thing. I am a servant, born and bred as such; and I never wish to be anything more."

It might be thought that quiet rational answers like these would have put a stop to Stephen's unpleasant remarks; but as they did not, John ceased to make them, and simply turned with a look of contempt from the ill-natured young man whenever he began his disagreeable banter. This silence was by no means pleasant to Stephen, for it made it difficult for him to pursue the system of annoyance by which he found a vent for his angry feelings; and it became necessary to devise some new plan for the gratification of his mean spite.

One day (it was that on which the maid-servant had advised Stephen to take pattern by John, and while her words were still rankling in his heart), he went up to the boy as he came into the kitchen prepared with his customary neatness to wait at table, and stretching out his hand, said,

"The seam in your hair is not true, let me put it even for you;" and before John was aware what the other was about, he thrust his fingers along the lad's head, and tumbling them among the hair, destroyed its neat appearance.

"What did you do that for?" said John, starting back; "what do you mean by such impertinence?"

"Impertinence!" repeated Stephen, with a sneer; "impertinence! a boy like you talking of impertinence! I shall do the same again, if I like."

"No, you will not," said John.

"I will," said Stephen, and he advanced a step or two.

"Beware," said John, doubling his fist; "I give you fair notice; touch me again and you must take the consequences."

But Stephen, whose bad passions were roused, would not take warning, and made another dive at John's head. John, however, was too quick for him, and dealt him a blow with his clenched fist. The blow fell harder than was intended, for it met Stephen's face just as he was bending forward to grasp the boy's hair; the consequence was, the eye swelled up, and the next morning it presented as black an appearance as if the footman had been worsted in a regular set-to with a boxer.

This event happened at an unlucky time for the credit of the family, for on the following day some ladies and gentlemen of great consequence in the neighbourhood were coming to dine at Belmont. It was in vain that Stephen, when he rose in the morning, bathed his eye and applied such remedies as he thought best—there was no getting rid of the blackness, and he was compelled to make his appearance in the breakfast-room in a state of disfigurement that could not fail to attract notice. He endeavoured to put John forward that he might avoid as much as possible being seen; but it was of no use, for as he was removing the urn, after the morning meal, the bright light of day fell full upon him, and his master looking up at the moment, uttered an exclamation of surprise, and asked what was the matter.

Stephen immediately replied that John had struck him.

"John," said Mr. Beaumont; "what John? You don't mean your mistress's page, do you?"

"Yes, I do," replied Stephen; "the young coxcomb! I was telling him about wasting his time over his dress, and he called me impertinent, and struck me a violent blow."

"This must not be," said Mr. Beaumont; "call the boy in."

John came boldly forward.

"What is this," said his master, "that I hear of you? Stephen says he reproved you for wasting your time, and that you used improper language towards him in consequence, and then gave him that terrible black eye."

"That is a very false account you have heard, sir," said John; then turning with a defiant air to Stephen, he asked, "when did you ever see me waste my time, or neglect what it is my duty to do?"

"Oh, pray," said Mrs. Beaumont, in an affected manner, "don't begin your vulgar quarrels here. Send them both off, Mr. Beaumont, discharge them," and the lady rose and left the room.

John thought how differently his last mistress would have acted in such a case; she would have gone firmly into it, and have drawn forth the whole truth, acquitting him who was right and condemning him who was wrong. He felt roused to assert himself, and made an exact statement of all that had passed between the footman and himself; repeating every word that had been spoken on either side. Stephen was so taken up with his own feelings and the hope, from what his mistress had said, that the page would get his discharge, that he hardly listened



to what John was saying, but when he ceased speaking, he said to his master,

"If you please, sir, is John to go?"

"If either of you go," replied Mr. Beaumont, "it certainly will not be John. The housekeeper makes no complaints of him, and it seems to me that the lad does very well; and as to this foolish affair, he has been the least to blame. You will both remain now, but take care I do not hear of anything of the kind again. Do you, Stephen, let the boy alone. Don't interfere with him; if he does wrong, there are others to tell him of his faults, and see that he amends his conduct. And do you, John, keep your fists to yourself."

So ended this affair, as far as the heads of the house were concerned; for after Stephen's eye had recovered its usual appearance, it passed from their minds, and was forgotten. Not so with the actors in the affray. John could not conceal the contempt that he felt for a person who would make such false representations as Stephen had done. And on the footman's side the remembrance of the blow that had been given him, and Mr. Beaumont having declared that John had been the least to blame on the occasion, increased his angry and spiteful feelings towards the boy five-fold, and he determined never to rest till somehow or other he had lessened, if not destroyed, John's popularity in the kitchen, and if possible to win for himself some of the favour so lavishly bestowed upon the object of his envy and dislike. With this purpose in view he was ever on the watch, and it did not escape so keen an observer that the page was gradually losing ground in the cook's estimation. Stephen also perceived that John was not aware that this was the case. This was quite true; for, owing to the injudicious praise and flattering re-

marks that had been passed upon him, he had unfortunately become so self-important that he never calculated upon the possibility of any change taking place to his disadvantage. If he had given the subject a thought, he might have noticed that the cook now seldom pampered him with delicacies as she once had done, but even then he would have considered the omission was accidental. Had he been a greedy boy he might have missed her dainty morsels, and wondered why they were no longer bestowed on him; but he had been taught by his mother, and afterwards by the friendly cook at "The Elms," not to attach too much importance to eating, and as he had always a sufficiency of good wholesome food, he was quite contented.

As the services of the servant boy had really been both useful and pleasant to the Belmont cook, he might easily have regained her favour had he taken any pains to do so. But he was grown conceited, and that odious quality blinded him to his own interest, and made him careless of the convenience of another.

Happily for the advantage of his character, circumstances occurred which destroyed his popularity among his fellow-servants, lowered his self-consequence, and caused him, however disagreeable it might be, to view himself with the sober eyes of truth.

One day when the cook was in a more than usual state of hurry and excitement, preparing for a grand dinner-party, the chain from which the roast joint was suspended broke with a sudden jerk, throwing the meat forward into the fire, and sending up streams of fat that caught the flames and made them blaze furiously. John saw the accident, but he was in no hurry to assist, fearing to soil his hands and dress; and

while he was debating what to do, Stephen rushed forward, caught back the joint, united the chain, and hung the meat up again before the cook had well recovered from the fright into which she had been thrown by the accident. Some little services besides he rendered in repairing the mischief that had been done to a part of the other cookeries, which were well timed, and enabled everything afterwards to go on smoothly.

The cook was too intent upon her important business to say anything at the moment, but from that day Stephen was taken into favour, and John was discarded.

There is an old saying, that "a favourite has no friends;" there is some truth in this, especially where there has been no solid foundation of good qualities to justify the preference. John's consequential airs had begun to make themselves unpleasantly felt with others besides the cook. He was altogether a very different lad from what he had been when he was kind and obliging for conscience-sake. Another cause tended to destroy his former popularity, which was a change among the female servants. The housemaid, who at first had looked very favourably upon him, and who even now viewed his errors with indulgence, went away, and her place was supplied by a cousin of the footman's. Esther Clay—that was her name—was a woman of a domineering temper, but she was shrewd and clever, and her opinions generally carried weight with those among whom she lived. She was strongly attached to Stephen, because he was the son of a kind aunt, who had brought her up from infancy, and had supplied to her the place of a mother. Esther was many years older than Stephen, and he looked upon her as a sort of second mother. On his cousin's arrival at Belmont, he lost no time in con-

fiding to her his antipathy to John, and she, without being at the pains to ascertain if it were true, believed that he had behaved very ill to her "aunt's boy." She therefore warmly espoused her cousin's cause, and undervalued all John's good qualities, set at naught his neat ways and appearance, and took every possible opportunity of finding fault with him and setting the other servants against him. About the same time with Esther, a new dairymaid arrived, and her John offended past forgiveness by some remarks he made upon her butter, it not being after the fashion of that model article produced at the Manor Farm. In short, every one turned against the former pet of the kitchen, "mistress's page," as he used to be termed in his days of favour.

John found the change hard to bear, and he became low and dispirited, at the same time a sense of humility grew upon him, greatly to his mind's advantage. It is true that he thought he by no means deserved *all* the ill-treatment he met with, but the blame which he was constantly incurring, especially that which came from Esther (a sensible woman as he could not but consider her), led him to reflect on the line of conduct he had pursued since he had lived at Belmont, and caused him to discover that vanity and the love of praise had too much influenced all his words and actions, and moreover, that his former flatterers had very much overrated his merits. With his mistress, too, he got out of favour, for, though not much in the habit of regarding the expression of her servants' countenances, she missed John's pleasant lively air, and considered that he now looked dull and discontented, and accordingly frequently spoke to him in a sharp, disagreeable manner.

The servant boy found his life at Belmont now

anything but pleasant, and he passed many a very unhappy hour, especially at night, when he was shut up in the silence and solitude of his own room. It would have been well if at such times he had turned for consolation to that Source which would have made all his grievances appear light and easy to bear. But unfortunately the worldliness of the family in which he was living—master, mistress, servants and all—had produced an injurious effect upon the mind of this young boy. There was no family prayer, no few words of kind advice or warning fell from the lips of the heads of the house, and they were indifferent as to whether their servants attended public worship or not. John knew his duty well—no boy had been better brought up, but the force of example of his betters and his elders was too strong for him. For some short time after coming to Belmont, he went regularly to church, and on his return he sought to talk over the sermon with the servants, as he had been accustomed to do with his mother and sister when living at "The Elms;" but his attempts were very coldly received, or he was not listened to at all, some making an excuse that they were too busy to attend, while others cut short what he was saying by exclaiming, "All very good, no doubt, but I can't listen now, I am not in a humour for solemn things."

The effect of all this was to weaken the lad's devotional feelings; and by-and-by he used to fancy that he could not get his work done in time to attend at church, and he not unfrequently let the hallowed day pass without his worshipping in God's holy house. His prayers, night and morning, he certainly did not neglect, he would have been uncomfortable to have done so, and would have experienced more of that gnawing feeling with which a conscience ill at ease harassed him.

In order to soothe the worry of his mind, and turn away for a time disagreeable thoughts, he brought up an entertaining book to read in his room at night, and, as he was often tired, he liked to read in bed. Now John had never been desired not to do so, but he was conscious that if this habit of his was known it would be very much disapproved of. It so happened that not long after he had adopted this mode of amusing himself his room needed some repairs, and while they were going on, he was moved into another, which was set apart for the use of ladies' maids when there happened to be any staying at Belmont. The bed in this room had curtains to it, which John's had not. Hitherto he had always been careful to extinguish his light directly he felt sleepy, but one unlucky night, it was after a day of unusual exertion, sleep overpowered him before he was aware; his book fell from his hand, and, upsetting the candle, the curtains caught fire and were blazing all over the bed, when the strong smell of burning awoke him. Starting up, he instantly became conscious of the mischief he had caused. He did not lose his presence of mind, and by rushing out of the room occasion a draught to increase the flames, but, heedless of burning his hands, he tore the furniture from the bedstead, and wrapping it together, put out the fire. It was a tent bedstead, and, excepting some of the rafters being scorched, it sustained no injury.

John was terribly frightened, but his greatest concern was the fearful anger that he felt certain he should have to encounter from the cook in her capacity of housekeeper. He slept but little that night, and woke the following morning with the sense of something very painful hanging over him, and his distress was not lessened by the consciousness that he had been guilty of very improper conduct. For

some time he stood irresolute what to do, whether he should leave the accident to be found out, or whether he should go at once and confess what he had done. He decided upon the latter course, and went to the housekeeper and requested her to come with him into the room and look at the damage he had been the unhappy cause of, while he assured her of his great regret and sincere sorrow. Her anger was quite as great as he had anticipated, and after scolding him most thoroughly, she said she would beg her mistress instantly to discharge him. This she did when she waited on Mrs. Beaumont after breakfast to receive her orders about dinner.

"I am all of a tremble, ma'am, still," said she, after she had given an exaggerated account of what had happened, "thinking how we might all have been burned in our beds, and owing to that wicked boy reading in *his* bed. Please, ma'am, to send him off directly."

"Without a month's warning, do you mean, Mrs. Housekeeper?" inquired Mrs. Beaumont.

"Oh dear, yes, ma'am, that I do; I should not rest in my bed a single night if I thought he was to remain; indeed, I would sooner go myself. I am awfully afraid of fire."

"Well, do just as you please," replied the mistress.

"Thank you, ma'am; then I will give the boy his month's wages and pack him off directly."

No time was lost in putting this threat into execution. John was ordered immediately up stairs to put up his clothes, and to take himself off directly after. The boy was all consternation at this decision and the suddenness of it. He had not doubted but that his reprehensible conduct would be visited with heavy displeasure, but he did not think the punishment

would be so great as to send him off at a minute's warning.

When he got into his room, he did not set about packing his clothes on the instant, as ordered. He could not; he felt quite bewildered, and only thought that he had been told to go, and then considered if there was any possibility of averting the misfortune of being turned away from his place in disgrace. Any appeal to his mistress he was sure would be useless, and equally hopeless would be the attempt to soften the cook's anger. He thought of his master, and hearing his voice below in the stable-yard, he hastened to him, and earnestly sought his intercession that he might be forgiven and allowed to remain in his place.

"Why, boy," said Mr. Beaumont, "you had nearly destroyed the house and burned us all alive in our beds. Bad business! Shocking, reading in bed!"

"Oh, sir!" cried John, "I will never do so again."

"I hope you will not, for the sake of those you live with, that is, if you ever get another place, which I don't think very likely."

"Oh! do, sir," earnestly entreated John, "let me stay here."

"I never interfere," said Mr. Beaumont, "with the arrangements about servants; I leave all that to Mrs. Beaumont and her housekeeper;" and calling to the groom for his horse, he mounted, and rode off.

All hope was now lost, there was nothing more to be done, and the unhappy boy returned to his room, where he tied up in a handkerchief a few things he should want for immediate use; and then when he went to the cook to receive his month's wages, he inquired in a trembling voice if his box might remain



till he could send for it. The reply was that he might leave the box as long as he liked, for the cook was experiencing a slight feeling of uneasiness that she had been unnecessarily severe upon her former favourite.

As soon as John had got out of sight of Belmont, he left the high road, and turning into a field, sat down on a bank and indulged in a hearty fit of crying.

There was no need of any hurry about his movements, his time now was, unhappily, all his own; still he reflected, when his cry was over, that he had better go on somewhere. He thought of his sister, and though he would be ashamed to tell her of what had happened, and the disgrace that had befallen him, the comfort of being with her and talking to her outweighed all other considerations, and he resolved to go to her. With this object in view he walked stoutly on, not stopping to rest, except to eat a penny roll he bought in a village he passed through, and reached the house where his sister lived before night. His arrival happened unfortunately at a time when he could not hope to see much of his sister, for the lady with whom she lived was very ill, and Betsey was in constant attendance upon her. However, the young girl contrived to spare her brother a few minutes, and he had the consolation of just hearing her express her sorrow and sympathy for him in his trouble. She also told him at what hour the next day he might call, when she would be able to give him a little more time, as the other servant would be up-stairs with the sick lady. And she recommended him to a house in the village where he could get a respectable lodging in which to remain while he looked out for another situation.

The meeting the next day between the brother and

sister was a painful one. John then told what he had not mentioned the preceding evening, namely, the cause of his dismissal from Belmont, and his sister had to learn with sorrow how very blamable his conduct had been. They talked the affair over a great deal, and Betsey asked John if it had not struck him that he was doing very wrong to read in bed. John sorrowfully replied that he knew he was doing what he ought not, but that he wanted the resolution to forbear.

"Oh! John, dear," exclaimed Betsey, "how sorry I am to hear you say so! Don't you remember when poor mother lay on her sick bed and we were nursing her, how often you used to say that if it would please God to spare her life you would do your best to be a good boy?"

"Yes, I do remember, Betsey," replied John; "and I wish that when I was living at Belmont I had reflected more upon what I used to say and think then. If I had, I should not have got into this terrible scrape."

"Well, dear, you will never do anything so wrong again."

"Indeed I will not, if I can possibly help it," said John; "and for the future I will strive all I can to do my duty."

The next day, and for many succeeding days, John went about from place to place, hoping to find a situation where a page or a servant boy was wanted in a gentleman's family. But though in the course of his diligent search he heard of several, his applications were all in vain—no one hired him. The reason almost invariably was hearing why he had left his last place.

People's lives and property are too valuable to be

at the mercy of an unprincipled boy, for such in this instance John undoubtedly was. He did wrong in the full knowledge of what he was about.

Mr. Beaumont's words most painfully recurred to John's mind as he proceeded on his weary search: "I do not think any one will hire you." He became dejected, lost his appetite, and grew thin. Every now and then he went to try and gain some small comfort from his sister; but poor Betsey had little to give except the assurance of her sorrow, and she was in much trouble herself on account of the increasing illness of her good mistress. And in addition to all these misfortunes was the sad fact that John's money was nearly all expended, and that he must either starve or look out for an inferior situation, and thus abandon the hopes and wishes that had been his from early childhood. Circumstanced as he now was, he considered it very unlucky that a short time before leaving Belmont he had expended the chief part of his last half-year's wages in purchasing linen and other necessary articles of wearing apparel. Had not this been the case, he might have still longer pursued his search for a place as page in a gentleman's family. As it was, he resolved at last to look out for a situation as farm-servant; or, should he be unsuccessful, even offer himself as errand-boy to some shopkeeper in a country town.

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## CHAPTER XV.

IN accordance with his determination to try for a situation as farm-servant, John went about seeking employment in this capacity to all the farms in the

neighbourhood; but no one hired him, not so much from disinclination to employ a stout likely lad as he appeared, but from its being a time of year when no hands were wanted besides those which were regularly engaged. Determined, however, not to lose a chance for want of any effort on his own part, the lad pursued his search in far distant places, often walking twenty miles a day, and then returning almost worn out in body and mind to renew the same wearying business on the following day. But it was all to no purpose, and as he had now come to almost his last shilling, he started off early one morning to reach the county town before the close of day, thinking that in so large a place he might find some sort of employment, he cared little what, in his despondency, which would afford him the means of obtaining sufficient food to keep life in him. On his arrival his first visits were to the greengrocers', to inquire if an errand-boy was wanted, but the masters were all suited with messengers. He next tried the bakers', but there he was told he was not old enough to carry out the bread. The butter-shops were then thought of, and here at last John met with better success. In the third where he begged for employment was a pleasant motherly sort of woman, who said, in answer to his application, that they, her son and herself, did want a boy to take out orders, but then they should prefer one who could occasionally serve in the shop, and that she thought, looking attentively at John as she said so, she did not think he had ever been used to.

The boy replied that he certainly had not, but he eagerly added he could learn.

The mistress of the shop appeared to be considering about something, when she said, "I suppose you would not like a situation as servant boy, as you want to be employed in a shop, but it strikes me

you are better fitted for that than for a place like ours."

John replied that he should much prefer being in a gentleman's family; besides, it was what he had been used to, and anxiously asked if she knew of a place which he might be likely to obtain. In answer he was informed that a lady had been that very morning inquiring for a page, and desiring that if any one likely to suit applied, to send him to her. He was also told that the family lived a few miles out of the town, was small in number, and no footman was kept. It was too late in the day to apply then, but early the next morning, furnished with a card from the mistress of the butter-shop, John set off to try his fortune once more in the line of life he preferred, and for which he was best fitted. When he first heard of the place in view he was much pleased and excited, but a little reflection showed him that the chances were as much against him here, as in every other situation he had tried to obtain, and by the time he arrived at the house to which he was bound, he very nearly determined to abandon the purpose he had come for, as causing needless trouble and vexation. Then again he thought that would be foolish, for he could not well go back to the butter-shop and ask to be employed there when he had not been at the pains to make the inquiry he had been advised about. Summoning courage, therefore, he rung the gate-bell, which was answered by a maidservant, who civilly inquired his business. John in answer said he wished to speak to the mistress, Mrs. Temple, that was the name of the lady living at this house, he believed.

The maid said he was right so far, but asked which Mrs. Temple he desired to see.

John showed the card of introduction, and said he was come to try for the place of servant boy.

"Oh, it is Mrs. Temple, master's mother, you want to see," replied the maid, "not Mrs. George. The elder lady manages all about the servants." And desiring John to follow her, she led him into the entrance-hall, where she left him, but quickly returned and showed him into a small neatly furnished parlour, in which were a number of books, and a table covered with articles of clothing for poor girls. Seated near a window was an elderly lady at work. On the boy's entrance she raised her head and looked complacently at him, apparently well satisfied with his air and manner. And here let it be remarked, that some merit was due to John for his having resolutely striven to overcome his awkwardness, and to acquire ways and habits that would render him pleasant to those with whom he lived. Mrs. Temple's first observation was, "I suppose you have lived in a gentleman's family before?" and John had just answered that he had for nearly three years, when the lady was called away on some urgent business, and after waiting above half an hour, the maid who had let him in came and told him that it was not possible for Mrs. Temple to speak to him again that morning, but that he was to write down his name and the place where he had last lived, and that the lady would write for his character, and he must call to know the result in two or three days. John did as desired, but these intervening days before he could know his fate was a time of great anxiety. Sometimes he hoped the lady might be led to overlook his late misconduct; and then again he feared that when she received his character from Belmont, she would at once give up all thought of hiring him, and even refuse to see him again.

In the mean time he learned a few particulars respecting the family into whose service he was desi-

rous of entering. Mr. Temple, the head of the house, had some occupation which detained him the whole week away from home, only returning on Saturday evening, and going away again on the following Monday morning.

His wife, Mrs. George, as she was always called, was a very young woman, having married on leaving school, rather more than a year ago. She knew little or nothing of housekeeping, and was with her husband very glad when his mother, Mrs. Temple, senior, agreed to live with them and undertake that office. And now that Mrs. George had an infant, she was still more rejoiced to be relieved from any care and thought on the subject. Mrs. Temple was represented as a clever managing, and at the same time kindhearted, woman. She was not only well pleased to have the direction of everything in her son's house, but she took great delight in training a set of girls to make thorough servants, governing and arranging everything respecting them down to the minutest particulars. They were twelve in number, and were clothed and educated chiefly at her sole expense. It was said that she was going to have a similar establishment for boys, but this, John's informant observed, might be only talk.

On the morning of the third day, John with a beating heart presented himself at Mrs. Temple's house, and inquired if the lady would see him. The gate was not opened by the servant he had seen before, but by a woman who held her apron to her mouth, and appeared to speak with pain. The boy could not make out what she said, whether he was to be admitted or not; but as she did not stop him, he ventured in, and soon found himself in the presence of Mrs. Temple. His painful doubts vanished

at sight of her. She had an open letter in her hand, and complacently looking at the boy said,

"I have just received an answer from Belmont, and the character given you is very fair. I will take you a month upon trial; I say a month, because another boy is coming here for the same time, and I shall thus have an opportunity of seeing how you both act, and be able to judge which suits me best. I see," continued she, referring to the letter, "that you left your last place because you were getting too old for it; now here——"

"What," exclaimed John, quite taken by surprise, "do they give that as the reason for my being discharged?"

"Yes," replied Mrs. Temple, in her turn surprised; "is not that true?"

John coloured up to the eyes, and hesitated for a few moments before he answered, not from any intention to hide the truth, for that he was assured in his own mind the lady ought to know, but the thought that all chance of the place must now be lost rushed upon him with painful force. Making a strong effort over himself to utter the sad truth, he said,

"The reason of my being sent away from Belmont was, because I set fire to the curtains of my bed, when——"

"Curtains!" exclaimed Mrs. Temple, eagerly interrupting John, "curtains to a servant-boy's bed! I never in my life heard of anything so foolish. I never allow anything of the kind here, young girls and boys in my establishment sleep without any bed-curtains. It was their fault at Belmont, but how did it happen? You were saying——"

"I was going on to say, ma'am," said John,



"that I was doing very wrong—I was reading in bed."

The bland expression of Mrs. Temple's countenance changed to one of strong disapprobation; and shaking her head, she said,

"Reading in bed is a fault of a most serious character, and one which I——"

"Oh, ma'am, do overlook it," cried John, vehemently interrupting the lady; "do pray do. If you will not, I shall never get a place—you don't know how many times I have tried for one since I left Belmont, and nobody would hire me, and all on account of my sad accident."

"It is such a dangerous thing to do. Perilling people's lives and property," said Mrs. Temple.

"I will never do it again," cried John; "you cannot think how sorry I am."

"You would not do so again, you say?" asked Mrs. Temple.

"Never," said John, fervently; "you may believe me, ma'am; I never will."

"Certainly," said Mrs. Temple, "you have just given a proof of your truth; you were not desired to tell, and I should never have known of the circumstance if you had not informed me. I will give a trial, you may stop."

A heartfelt "thank you" burst from John's lips; and after the matter of wages, &c., was settled, and he was informed of what was expected of him, he retired to commence his duties with a full determination to do his very best to give satisfaction.

In order to account for John's delinquencies being overlooked, and his receiving a favourable character from Belmont, it must be stated that when the cook, who was conscious she had been too severe with the boy, heard of a letter of inquiry coming from a lady

who was desirous of hiring him, she begged her mistress to speak favourably of him; and instead of saying anything about having set his bed on fire, to assign as a reason for his dismissal that he was getting too old for the place; and that, added she, "is no more than the truth, ma'am; for with so young a footman as Stephen, it is better that the servant boy should be more of a child."

It was quite consistent with the pleasure Mrs. Temple had in training and educating young persons for service, that she should take two boys at the same time into her house. She thought that by acting together in the same capacity, one would draw forth the powers of the other, and she would thus see which did best. Another important reason was, that they would be a check one upon the other, should either be inclined to do wrong; and this was the more desirable, as the last boy who had lived with her was deceitful, and had many sly ways.

With the two boys that the lady now had to deal, there was little chance of her meeting with dissimulation and falsehood. John was still too true of heart to be capable of either; and David Joyce, his fellow servant boy, was as harmless and free from guile as an infant.

David was the son of a very poor but respectable woman in the village: a widow with eight young children, of whom this boy was the eldest. Mrs. Temple had selected him partly out of compassion for his mother, and partly on account of his good disposition. As a boy fitted for the purpose for which he was wanted, Mrs. Temple could hardly have fixed on a more unpromising subject. David knew little of any other employment beyond nursing babies; for no sooner was one little brother put upon his own legs to trot about, than up came another, re-

quiring the same care and attention ; and as to any of the refinements which wealth and easy circumstances give, the extreme poverty in which he lived forbade his having any ideas of. Added to all which, he was rough in appearance and manners. In the new and to him strange position of life in which he found himself placed at Mrs. Temple's he was perfectly bewildered, and he looked upon John, as he quietly and regularly performed the duties of his situation, as a person whom it would be hopeless for him to compete with.

Mrs. Temple endeavoured to encourage David. She bid him try to imitate John, and this, as he was really not deficient in capacity, he strove to do. But it was a very slow process, and somewhat disheartening, for while he was thinking he would do what seemed so very easy as performed by another, the thing was done. If bread was called for at dinner, while he was looking to find it on the sideboard, the plate was in John's hand, and he was presenting it. If plates were to be changed, or dishes removed, he could never get to the table in time to perform these offices. And when coals were rung for, John had the scuttle filled before David had well reached the cellar where they were kept.

Thus passed a fortnight, when the poor mother came privately to inquire of her David "how he got on."

"It would be such a fine thing for us all if you could stop," said she, after the first affectionate greetings between them were over. "The wages Madam Temple said she would give you would be such a help!"

"And my keep too, mother," said David, "there would not be that, if I could stop out. It often went to my heart to eat the bread you had such hard

work to earn, and to take it from the little ones too."

"Do you think," again anxiously inquired Mrs. Joyce, "you can do, or will the other lad get the place?"

"He is so very quick and clever, mother," answered David with a heavy sigh.

"Was that him passed by just now?" inquired Mrs. Joyce; "he looked quite like a gentleman's servant."

"Do you know, mother," said David, with sudden animation, "that I heard him tell one of the maids the other day that he was once nearly as awkward a boy as I am."

"Did he indeed!" exclaimed Mrs. Joyce; "perhaps he could show you how to get like him, as he is now. But then," added she, sorrowfully, "he wants the place himself. Is he good-natured?" inquired she, as a faint hope again crossed her mind that the "quick, clever," servant boy might instruct her son to become one likewise.

In answer to her question, "was John good-natured?" David replied that he did not take much notice of him, but that the servants all seemed to like him. Then looking very grave, he said,

"Has the landlord been again, mother?"

"He has," sorrowfully replied Mrs. Joyce; "he has taken poor father's bed, and says he must have mine, unless I pay the rent."

"When, mother?"

"Soon, he said," answered Mrs. Joyce. "Oh do, David, try and get this place—try all that ever you can."

"I will, mother," replied the boy, and putting his arms around her, he added, "and do you try and keep up your spirits."

Mrs. Joyce wiped away a few tears, which were caused as much by her child's affectionate caress as by the thought of her troubles, and said,

"I left baby by the gate, Billy is holding him; would you not like just to have a peep at him?" and stepping forward she beckoned to her other son to come forward.

"How are you, Billy?" said David, and seizing hold of the infant he hugged and kissed it with great delight, and as he gave his former nursling up to its mother, he raised a smile on her careworn face by exclaiming, that "baby was very much grown!"

Of this little scene, of what had been said and done by David and his mother, John had been a witness. He had no wish nor intention of overhearing anything that was meant to be private; but he was engaged in cleaning the plate on the kitchen dresser, close to the window, and the window was open, and he thought the parties knew that he was there. The probability is that the mother and son became so absorbed in their own business, that they forgot they were within hearing of any one else. Be that as it might, what passed between them made a strong impression on John.

The love evinced by Mrs. Joyce and David for one another reminded him of the affection that used to subsist between his own dear mother and himself; and then he was moved by the circumstance of the poor woman's goods being seized for rent, but above all he was affected by the mother's earnest entreaties that her son would try and gain the place; and the piteous but tender look she cast on him as she spoke haunted John for hours afterwards. Then as he pursued his daily work with the awkward boy by his side, Mrs. Joyce's words, "perhaps he would teach

you," recurred to him again and again. And then came the question he put to himself, "Suppose I was to do so?" quickly followed by the answer, "and he might get the place and I should lose it."

The situation in question was one that was particularly pleasant to John. There was a repose and quiet about it that was very delightful, after the life so full of vanity and strife and contention which he had lately lived. All was peace and harmony. The heads of the house desired to promote the welfare of their servants, and they in their turn were careful of the interests of their master and mistresses. John's duties were easy of performance, and nearly every day there was time for him to work in the garden. This he liked, not only on account of his fondness for the occupation, but it kept him in health. His constitution required out-door exercise and fresh air, and of this he had been accustomed to a tolerable portion in both his other places, when driving out with his mistresses.

If what was required in the family in which he was now living was a servant boy who thoroughly understood his business, and whose manners and address were good, John could feel little doubt but that a preference would be awarded him over the ignorant, uncouth lad who was on trial with him. That such a one was wanted he was well aware, and also that it would take more training, and would require more patience to bring David up to the mark, than even Mrs. Temple, with all her fondness for education, could command.

At the same time, David was docile and good-tempered, and willing to learn, and if any one would teach him, and put him in the right way of doing his business, there was no doubt but that he would get on, and John thought it not unlikely that he

might be preferred to himself. What made this appear probable to John, was the having observed on more occasions than one, that whenever David did anything that showed the least progress in his business, Mrs. Temple regarded him with more approbation than she ever bestowed on his own best endeavours to give satisfaction.

John felt restless and unsettled all the day after Mrs. Joyce's visit to her son.

At night he said his prayers with more attention than he had done for many months past, and he rose up after them calmer and more composed; still he could not sleep, for a struggle was going on in his mind whether he should or should not assist David to become a better servant. It was in his power to help him forward very much, by instructing him in doing many things of which he had now no notion, or did very imperfectly. Then, on the other hand, by so doing he might throw himself out of a place he should be very glad to retain. It was not in his nature not to feel compassion for both mother and son, and he recalled to mind how thankful he himself had been in his earlier days for any help that had been given him in learning what he was desirous of knowing. He remembered his mother's kind instructions, the useful hints he had received from his sister and others, the leisure that had been afforded him to watch how raw lads were trained into shape and comeliness by the recruiting sergeant, and still later the advantage he had derived from living with so good a mistress as Mrs. William Anderson, not to say anything of the cook at "The Elms" wise counsels.

In Mrs. Temple's reading that night had occurred the sacred precept, "As you would that others should do to you, do you even so to them." He

repeated these words to himself, and with them still on his lips he fell asleep.

He woke early the next morning, and they recurred again to his mind. He thought of the Saviour's unspeakable love; living a life of poverty, without having even a place where to lay his head, and dying an agonizing death on the cross to secure the eternal happiness of sinners. And what has He asked in return? That we should love one another, lend assistance where it is needed, and give of anything we have to bestow.

"How little have I loved Jesus Christ!" exclaimed John, struck with a sudden feeling of contrition, "how little have I ever done to please Him! All my strivings to get on and do well have been for myself; and where I have loved, it has been those who have loved me." Then he reflected, that though he had no money to give to assist his poorer fellow-creatures, he had it now in his power to help in a way that would be of far more value than any trifling alms he could bestow. He could be of great assistance to his fellow servant boy, and if it should prove in the end that by so doing David got the nice place instead of himself, he should have the happy consciousness of having done what is right, and that his heavenly Father would not forsake him.

With this good purpose constantly in view, John devoted himself to the improvement of David. He taught him to clean plate without scratching it, knives without hacking them, boots and shoes without smearing them, to wash glasses so as to look bright, to fold table-linen in a proper manner, and a variety of other things which, however trifling they may appear to read of, were matters of no small importance to an ignorant cottage boy, who knew nothing of life beyond what was to be met with in



his own humble abode. But more than all, John's chief pains were bestowed on making David more competent to wait at table, and for this purpose he would go with him to a room where they could be free from interruption, set out a number of plates and dishes, and practise David in removing or placing them; first empty, then with water in them, that the lad might learn to move them without spilling their contents. David had a habit of lifting everything with both hands, and it was a long while before he could be broken of it. Even after part of several mornings had been devoted to this particular branch of instruction, John would often see his pupil lay both hands on his mistress's plate to remove it, though when alone he would use only one as desired: it seemed as though the boy's faculties were overpowered by the presence of his superiors.

On the following Saturday, when Mr. Temple came home, he brought a friend with him to dinner, and John, desirous that David should appear to as much advantage as possible, put him forward whenever he could, placing things that were called for in his hands, and giving him a friendly push forward. And when the lad had to change a plate he followed close after him, and caught one of the outstretched arms, and held it back while the other performed the necessary office, and this he did so quietly, that no one of the company was aware of it. On David himself it produced a very good effect, for it broke the spell, and this awkward habit was overcome.

## CHAPTER XVI.

DAVID was very thankful to John for all the good instruction he gave him; and John on his side felt interested in the improvement of the rough lad, and would have been glad to promote his well-doing in other matters besides the duties of his place. One Sunday morning, when the two boys were preparing for church, John asked David if he could read. David seemed a little surprised at the question, and opening his prayer-book, began quickly to mark the different parts of the service with slips of paper, wetting his thumb or finger as he turned over the leaves in his haste to find the places.

"What do you do that for?" said John; "it is a nasty trick, and makes your book dirty."

"I can't turn over the leaves without I wet my finger," replied David; "don't you?"

"I should like to know what my schoolmaster would have said to me if I had ever done such a thing," exclaimed John. "It is all habit, and the right way is as easy as the wrong, if you take a little trouble at first. Besides, as mother used to say, by often wetting the corners, the paper gets rotten, and the edges tear off, and the book looks shabby."

"Well, I will try and not do it any more," said David; "but what made you think I could not read?"

"I will tell you," said John; "every time you and I have been to church we have sat together, and I never once heard you utter a single response, or once say Amen."

"Ought I?" inquired David; "I don't think mother ever told me to do so."

"Perhaps she does not do it herself," said John; "it is quite surprising how many people, and good people too, will attend at church, and act as though it was private, not public worship. My mother used to say, that if we did not take part in the service, we might expect that our share of benefit from it would be less. And look here what is written; perhaps you can't read this kind of print, but persons are desired to repeat the answers in an audible voice."

"What is the meaning of audible?" asked David.

"It means that what you say must be distinctly heard," replied John. "Now, you must speak out to-day, not so loud though as to disturb others, but so as to show that you are taking an active part in what is going on, and are all attention."

When any company called, it was John's business to answer the door, at the same time David was ordered to come forward in case he was wanted. One day when the boys were in the dining-room, about to clear away the dessert, a lady arrived to speak to Mrs. Temple on a little business, and the drawing-room happening just then not to be in a fit state for any one to be shown into, John was desired to go and ask the lady to walk into the dining-room. Mrs. Temple, in the meantime, hastily put the plates and dishes together, and pushing them towards David, said,

"These are done with now, take them away to wash; but be careful of the fruit-dishes, as one, I perceive, is cracked."

John was detained a little while to do something

or other for his mistress, and when he joined David to assist in "clearing up," the boy called out gaily,

"Here is something nice for you!" and he showed a dozen fine French plums; "you shall have six, and I will have six."

"Where did you get them from?" asked John.

"I found them mixed up with some paper in the dirty dishes mistress told me to take away and wash."

"She did not know these plums were left in the dish, I am sure," said John.

"Don't you think she did?" said David.

"No; the lady coming in, mistress put the things together hastily, and no doubt forgot the plums. Now do you put them in a plate, and when the visitor is gone, carry them in to your mistress."

"I will," said David, rather reluctantly, "if you really think we ought not to eat them."

"The plums are not yours, and it would not be honest in you to keep them," said John.

"I am sure," cried David, "I never thought about doing anything dishonest. Mother told me to be sure and mind about that. But these plums, I thought, was such a little thing to mind about."

"Little or large," said John, "it is a servant's duty to be strictly honest. Betsey, that is my sister, said that her schoolmistress, when she was talking to those girls who were going to service, bid them never take even a pin that was not their own. And boys have just the same need to be careful even in the most trifling things."

David's notions of honesty were as rough as the rest of his character. On no account would he have taken anything that was not his own; but of that nicer feeling which seeks to restore what is lost to

its rightful owner, he had no idea, at least not as regarded little things. What John had said on the subject seemed to open to him a new view of the matter, and for the future he acted in accordance with what he had heard.

He was now quite willing to give up the little treat he had promised himself, and as soon as the visitor had departed, following John's advice, he carried the plums to his mistress.

Mrs. Temple was quite pleased at this instance of scrupulous honesty in the boy, and greatly commended him. David felt the praise he received was due to another, and said it was John who had bid him bring the plums to her, and owned that if he had not done so he should have eaten them.

Mrs. Temple told David that he did right to tell the truth and not to take merit that belonged to another; at the same time, she thought it a good feature in his character to have spoken out as he had done.

It was very evident that the boy was greatly altered for the better since he first came to Mrs. Temple's.

A day or two before the month of trial was up, his mistress said to him,

"You are very much improved of late; getting on quite well! how is it that——"

"Oh! it is John's doing!" cried David, in his delight at this praise, abruptly interrupting Mrs. Temple. "It is all John's doing. I knew he could make a servant of me if he would; and he has been so kind, ma'am, you can't think the pains he has taken."

As the time drew near for the important decision to take place, as to whether John or David was to remain as servant boy in the Temple family, both

boys became very anxious and excited on the subject. Both were very desirous of remaining, and at the same time both felt very doubtful on whom the choice would fall. David did not hesitate to say that he thought John must get the situation, "he was so much the cleverest, and he knew his business so much the best, that he required very little telling; while he knew that he himself was still awkward, and needed a great deal more teaching before he could perform his duties thoroughly, but," added he, "if mistress should keep me I should be so glad! Oh! it would be such a fine thing for mother and all of us! I should be able to buy mother a warm cloak for the winter, and baby a pair of shoes."

At last the important day arrived, and all hopes and conjectures were put an end to by Mrs. Temple announcing that her decision was made. Her choice fell on—David. It will be right to assign the reasons for a choice that might otherwise appear extraordinary; the preferring to retain, in a gentleman's family, a rough boy hitherto ignorant of all a servant's duties, to one who had been well trained and was capable of performing, in a very creditable manner, all that was requisite in such a situation. There were two reasons that mainly influenced Mrs. Temple in the decision she made in David's favour. The first was that his mother was a very poor, hardworking woman, and the lady considered that by taking a stout growing lad out of the family into her service, she was conferring an essential benefit on Mrs. Joyce. Mrs. Temple's other motive was that David still wanted a great deal of training and educating to fit him for his place, and would thus afford her ample scope for an occupation she liked. Had she retained John, there would have been very little for her to do

in this way, for he had already been so well taught that there would have been little more for her to do than to give her orders and see they were obeyed.

When Mrs. Temple told John that he was to go, he could hardly restrain his tears, and his voice faltered so that he could with difficulty speak. Mrs. Temple was quite surprised to find him thus moved, and kindly said that she had no idea he was so anxious to remain.

"I thought," continued she, "that you were taking great pains with David in order that he might be rendered fit to obtain this place."

"I helped David forward," replied John, struggling to speak with composure, "because I thought it was my duty to do so."

"That was very kind of you," said Mrs. Temple, "it shows a good heart. As regards your conduct during the month I have had you on trial, you have behaved very well, and I think favourably of your character. You are willing and obliging, and are well acquainted with the customary work of a servant boy, and I have no doubt you will readily get another place, and one, perhaps, that would suit you better than this, for we keep very little company, and there is not much opportunity of seeing anything of the world."

"I don't want a better place than this," said John, in a choking voice.

"If we wanted two servant boys," said Mrs. Temple, "I should be glad to have you live here; but poor David, if I do not keep him, I am afraid he would have but little chance of getting another situation."

Mrs. Temple then told John that he was welcome to remain till he could hear of a place, and that she would give him a good character.

The favourable opinion of him which Mrs. Temple expressed, and the allowing him to remain till he got another situation, softened John's regret at going away. He began immediately to look out for a place; but though he was diligent in his search, ten days passed and nothing appeared in view, and he became uneasy at the idea of encroaching so long on Mrs. Temple's kindness. She bid him not concern himself on that account, for he was quite welcome to stop till he was suited. John evinced his gratitude by continuing his instructions to David, who on his side did all he could to profit by them.

At the end of about a fortnight, it was just after post-time, John was summoned into the drawing-room to speak to Mrs. Temple.

"I have good news for you," said she as John came in; "I have got a letter from my brother, Mr. Vernon, who inquires if I can recommend him a boy who has been under a footman, and can wait at table. He resides about thirty miles from here; the family is not large, but a good deal of company is kept, and a quick, active servant boy is required. Shall you like to go? you will find my brother a good master, and if you behave as you have done here, I think you will suit very well."

There could be no doubt about John's being ready to accept the offered place at Mr. Vernon's. The gentleman was written to, and arrangements were made, and in due time John was established to begin life again in a fresh abode, and with a new master and mistress, and with fellow-servants who were strangers to him.

However, he was not destined to remain here long, for just as he was beginning to feel settled, and was learning to esteem the family, and to be sociable with the servants, Mr. Vernon was appointed by



Government to a consulship abroad, and the establishment was broken up.

John considered this event very unfortunate for him, for, besides losing a situation he liked, the character he could take with him from his two last places was so very short that he feared it would be against him wherever he offered himself for service.

He ventured to tell his trouble to his master, and he, notwithstanding that he was very much occupied with his own affairs, kindly entered into the matter. He informed the boy that there was still a little time remaining before all must leave, and that he had his full permission to look out for a place; and that in case he himself should be gone away before one was found, he would give him a letter containing the character he had received with him from Mrs. Temple, and at the same time state "why the servant boy had remained so short a time in the service of Mr. Vernon."

This was very consolatory to John, and though he did not succeed in getting a place before Mr. Vernon took his departure, the letter he kindly wrote and gave to John proved an all-sufficient recommendation to a gentleman who was on the look-out for a page to attend upon his wife. This gentleman, whose name was Chester, having satisfied himself, by inquiring of Mrs. Temple, that Mr. Vernon did write the letter, hired John.

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## CHAPTER XVII.

JOHN considered himself very fortunate in being so soon again, and with so little difficulty, settled in

another service. But any one who knew him, and wished him well, would have felt deeply concerned that he should have entered Mr. Chester's family. The boy, in his eagerness for a re-engagement, was at no pains to inquire the character of his employer, or what sort of place it was. Indeed, he never thought of doing so. He forgot that his mother had said that with her consent her son should never serve persons who were not religious, and who had no care for the spiritual welfare of their domestics.

Mr. Chester's time and thoughts were engrossed by his favourite pursuit, which was horse-racing. He spared no expense nor trouble in procuring fine animals and training them for the sport. He was a man of large fortune, and in following the amusement he delighted in he was frequently away from home. But wherever he was, whether abroad or at Milwood Hall—the name of his seat,—the stable-yard was constantly thronged with a set of men, who, though not wholly idle, had a great deal of unemployed time on their hands. There were grooms, helpers, stable-boys, always on the spot, and hither were often drawn for a pleasant lounge, the butler and footman; and here too after a time came John, following instead of avoiding bad example.

Neither were the maid-servants of a sort to do a young boy any good, for they were careless and wasteful, and their thoughts seemed to run on little else than dress and finery.

John, as has been already stated, was hired as lady's page, but he saw very little of his mistress. She was a great invalid, and liked being waited upon chiefly by her own maid; so that the boy, except carrying up notes and letters, and conveying messages, often passed whole days together without any other employment in the lady's service. As to the

house work, which occupied him in his other situations, he frequently did but little of it, or avoided it altogether. There was always some man or boy about, who cleaned boots, shoes, and knives, or some kitchen assistant who undertook the polishing of glasses and washing decanters.

Mrs. Chester's medical attendant wished her to be as much as possible in the open air; and for this purpose when the day was fine, or when she felt equal to the exertion, she drove out in her pony phaeton; and at these times John was her attendant, she preferring him to one of the men-servants. She had ascertained that John could drive well, and she was not timid in a carriage. Still Mr. Chester did not think proper to trust his lady to John's coachmanship without first making trial himself of the boy's skill. For this purpose Mr. Chester took John out with him two or three times when he had calls to make in the neighbourhood, and let him drive the lady's pony phaeton. The boy acquitted himself perfectly to his master's satisfaction; more than that, indeed, for one morning, passing through a large town, on market-day, John threaded his way so dexterously among carts and vans, and carriages of various descriptions, that he called forth great praise from Mr. Chester, who not only delighted in horses, but derived much pleasure from seeing them well managed.

John was much elated by his master's commendation; but unfortunately it roused up his old foible—vanity; and in his desire to show off and be admired he drew upon himself, in more instances than one, unpleasant consequences.

It so happened that several weeks elapsed before his services were required to drive out his mistress. He was getting impatient, when one fine day he re-

ceived orders to have himself and the phaeton in readiness to attend upon her.

Among the occupants of the stable-yard was a youth who regarded John with jealous eyes, in consequence of his having superseded him. Blake, that was his name, had been for a short time in the same capacity as John, namely, page to Mrs. Chester; but that lady not liking him, besides considering him too old for the situation, he was dismissed, and his place filled by John. He was still in service at Millwood Hall, for Mr. Chester, considering that the lad had some good points about him respecting horses, retained him, and appointed him one of the helpers in the stable. By this fall in position Blake considered himself degraded, and was not inclined to look with favourable eyes upon him who had supplanted him with his mistress. From time to time he made unpleasant jeering remarks to John, which, as John was not conscious of deserving, he considered unpleasant, and excited in him a wish to triumph over the jealous lad—a feeling that he certainly would never else have experienced.

Blake was by when the order came for John to be prepared to drive Mrs. Chester out; and when all was ready, and the page with whip in hand, his white gloves on, and his trim attire neatly adjusted, was standing beside the phaeton, watching the clock for the moment to arrive that he was to repair to the hall door, the envious lad came up, and setting his arms akimbo, burst out into a mocking laugh and exclaimed:

"What, you, master page, going to drive! I hope Mrs. Chester has insured her neck: better trust to a baby in leading-strings: you can't drive!"

"Can't I?" said John, springing into the phaeton; "come and see," and he turned into a large

courtyard adjoining, and putting the ponies into a brisk trot, drove several times up and down beside a wall, keeping so close to it that the wheels were not more than an inch or two from it, never swerving in the smallest degree from that position. And then each turn was made on the least possible piece of ground, evincing a skill in coachmanship that hardly could be surpassed. Several of the men who were looking on broke forth into loud exclamations of approval at his feats.

"Well done! capital!" said they, and clapped their hands.

John was all delight, and calling to mind his master's praise, he grew quite excited, and urging the ponies to a still quicker pace, turned a triumphant smile on Blake, and was in the act of raising his hat in mock humility to him, when a man who was ignorant of what was passing in the courtyard, issued from one of the out-buildings to shake a horsecloth. The ponies passing at the moment took fright, dashed across the way, and before John could recover his command of them they rushed past an open door, the projecting bar of which drew a long and deep scratch on one of the highly polished panels of the carriage.

John was quite dismayed at the accident, and exceedingly sorry for the mischief he had done.

"It has taken the shine out of you at any rate," said Blake, with ill-concealed satisfaction at this mortifying termination to John's exploits.

"You had loosened your hold of your horses," said the old coachman; "you had not got them well in hand. It never does, in driving, to be a moment off your guard."

"True," said John; and thoroughly humbled he drove round to the hall door. Mr. and Mrs. Chester

were already there, and John, getting down, pointed out to his master the sad blemish on the phaeton of which he had been the cause. Expressing his great regret, he was proceeding to explain how the accident had happened, when Mr. Chester, whose thoughts were occupied by some approaching races, cut him short, saying :

"Send it (the phaeton) to the coachmaker's when it is done with to-day."

As to Mrs. Chester, she was much too intent upon the arrangement of her cushions and her wraps, to pay any attention to the external appearance of her carriage ; and when at last she was settled to her satisfaction, she bid John drive on, which he did, greatly relieved to find that so little importance was attached to a circumstance which he imagined would have drawn upon himself great displeasure.

But it was not thus lightly that his accident was suffered to pass off in another quarter. It afforded a never-ending subject for Blake's taunts and ridicule ; till at last John lost all temper, and declared that if he did not desist from such aggravating behaviour, he would give him a sound thrashing. This threat had the desired effect of silencing the ill-mannered youth ; for though Blake was much the elder of the two, he was slight and weakly made in comparison with John, and he had no fancy to risk an encounter with one who he felt sure would soon overpower him. But though compelled to abstain from annoying language, his ill-feeling towards John suffered no abatement, as will presently appear.

John's love of exercise made him desirous of more occupation in the open air than was afforded by the occasional drives with Mrs. Chester. Often as he stood watching the grooms as they led the different horses from the stables away to exercise, he longed

to have a share in that employment, and at last the wish became so strong that he applied to one of the men to know if it could be gratified. The groom whom John asked to grant him this favour was a good-natured man, but on hearing that the page had never been on a horse's back, he shook his head, and said that, "Master was so very particular, he should not like to trust none of his *cattle* to a chap who knew nothing about riding."

John replied that he could learn to ride, and urged the groom to teach him so earnestly, that at last the man consented, and placing the boy on a quiet horse, took him along with him several mornings when he himself was airing one of the racers. John was an apt pupil, and the instruction he received so good, that before long he was trusted to ride out with the men when they went to exercise the horses.

It had been a favourite taunt of Blake's to John, that he had never been on a horse, and that he could not sit one; and now that he found that the lad could not only ride, but had been praised for his horsemanship, he was much displeased, and considered how he could mortify John respecting his new acquirement.

Blake was a good rider, and it often fell to his lot to exercise any horse whose high spirit sometimes rendered it difficult to manage. One day, mounted on a horse of this description called Dart, he, with another groom and John, were riding on a common not far from the Hall. After galloping several times up and down the level turf, Blake pulled his horse in beside John, and amused himself by making it curvet and caper, and then, by some particular touch, caused the animal to kick and plunge. Soothing the horse again into quiet, he said with a sneer to John:

"It would have frightened you out of your life had you been on my horse just now; or more likely you would have been sent to the ground the first plunge. You must be tied on if they ever attempt to set you on an animal like this."

John, who from having only been on steady horses, rode boldly, and imagined himself to be an expert horseman, did not at all relish these remarks; and on their being repeated, he answered sharply:

"I am quite as good a rider as you, and can sit any horse as well."

This answer, together with the manner in which it was uttered, caused Blake a fit of laughter, which made John still more angry, and incited him to say:

"If you will get off, I will mount that horse directly; and you shall see how well I will sit him, however he may kick and plunge."

This was exactly what Blake wanted; he was desirous, by undervaluing John's skill as a horseman, to induce him to make this proposal, in order that he might be a witness to the other's discomfort, feeling sure that no inexperienced rider could manage a horse of so high a spirit as the one he himself was upon. Still Blake, fearing the groom, who was of the party, might object to such a trial of skill on John's part being made, refused the page's request then, but lowering his voice so as not to be overheard by the other man, said:

"Not to-day; when we are out to-morrow you shall ride this horse."

Accordingly, on the morrow, when the two youths went out to exercise the horses, Blake having managed that they should go alone, a change was made. Blake got on John's quiet steed, and John mounted the spirited animal from which the other



had descended. For some little time they proceeded steadily along—John wholly devoid of fear, and proud to be on so noble an animal as Dart; while Blake, intent on mischief, was meditating how and when to put the horse on its mettle, so as to give his inexperienced rider a thorough fright, if not to unseat him.

On reaching the far end of the common, the riders encountered a party of ladies, who, struck with the beauty of the horse on which John was mounted, stopped to look at it. John, feeling no doubt, as he was carrying himself after the manner he had observed in dragoons, that he came in for a full share of their admiration, drew himself still more upright with an air of great self-satisfaction. This gesture was not lost upon Blake; and inwardly laughing at the lad's vanity, he availed himself of it the more readily to put his project in execution.

"Upon my word," said he, "you have quite a military air on horseback; those ladies were quite struck with you. I should not wonder that you could manage Dart perfectly well, even if he did throw up his legs a little higher than usual."

"Is it after the fashion of dragoons?" said John, pleased and flattered, and not in the least doubting the speaker's sincerity.

"I declare," continued Blake, "the ladies are looking after you. Come, let us have a gallop, and you can show off a little more. Now, wheel round." And as John drew the bridle to turn his horse, Blake, unseen by his companion, touched Dart with his whip in a way the high spirited animal never could bear, and which made him instantly kick and plunge; and poor John, wholly unprepared for such behaviour on the part of the horse, was thrown with violence to the ground.

Blake burst into an immoderate fit of laughter. "So that is the way the dragoons sit their horses! Ha, ha, ha!" cried he.

But John lay motionless on the ground, and Blake, beginning to think that he had perhaps carried his "joke" a little too far, got down from his horse, and bending over the boy, asked if he was hurt.

"Yes," faintly replied John.

"Not much, I dare say," said Blake, relieved to hear the prostrate lad speak. "Come, get up," continued he; "don't sham."

This unfeeling speech roused John's energies, and assisted by Blake he got upon his legs.

"My arm is broken," said John, as the useless limb hung down by his side.

"Not a bit of it," said Blake, passing his hand along John's arm; "your arm is safe enough. You have hurt your wrist, perhaps," continued he, as the injured boy shrunk from his companion's rough touch.

"We will soon have your wrist put all right," said Blake; "but I must be off after Dart; he has galloped home, no doubt. Master would be in a fine rage if anything happened to him; he is such a favourite." So saying, the unfeeling youth mounted his horse, and rode off towards the Hall, leaving John to follow after as well as he was able.

Mr. Chester had been passing some time that same morning in and about the stables; and when his valuable horse Dart came rushing along, chafed and fretted, without a rider, he was considerably alarmed lest anything wrong had befallen it; and when a few minutes after Blake rode into the yard, he eagerly inquired,

"What is the matter?"

"Nothing is the matter with the horse, sir," an-

swered Blake. "It is only that he did not like John's management of him, so he threw him."

"And where is the boy?" asked Mr. Blake.

"Comin' on, sir," replied the youth; "following behind."

"What do you mean," said Mr. Chester, angrily, "by putting a boy like John, who I am told never rode till he came here, on to a high-spirited horse like Dart? You knew my orders, that no one but an experienced rider should mount him."

"John thinks himself such a one, sir," replied Blake, in a somewhat hesitating manner.

"But you did not think so," replied Mr. Chester, greatly displeased; "you knew better, and knew my orders, though the boy did not. You shall leave my service instantly. My horses are much too valuable for such as you to play pranks with."

Blake began a loud blubbering cry, and begged his master's forgiveness; and he was still entreating for pardon when John, with pale and downcast looks, returned, and hearing Mr. Chester's determination, begged that Blake might be excused, declaring it was entirely his own fault in insisting that he could manage Dart.

This was generous behaviour on John's part, for he was not without a suspicion that in some way or other Blake had caused the horse to throw him.

John was in great pain, and his wrist was frightfully swollen. Mr. Chester ordered him in, and desired that medical assistance should be immediately sent for.

Besides a dislocation of the wrist, John had been severely bruised; and after the doctor had done all that was required in the first instance, he ordered the boy to be kept in bed for above a week. During *that* time John had plenty of leisure to reflect on the

foolish vanity which had caused all his suffering; and he made many good resolutions, never again to be blinded to his own defects, or to his want of knowledge by flattering speeches. It was not a small aggravation, either, of his painful state, that though Blake had been forgiven and allowed to retain his place through his mediation, the ungrateful youth never once came near him to ask how he was, or inquire if he could render him any little service. And furthermore, except the visits of the doctor, and the attendance necessary upon a sick person which was afforded him, he saw no one. None of the servants, nor any one of all the men with whom he used to be in daily intercourse in the stable-yard, ever entered his room to say "How are you?" or utter one word of sympathy or kindness.

Thus circumstanced, the companionship of his sister would have been most valuable; but he was aware that she could not leave her mistress; neither did he like the idea of bringing her a long distance, which would be attended with much expense. His own money he concluded he should want to discharge the doctor's bill. But in this expectation he was mistaken; for Mr. Chester always paid for any medical assistance required by his servants.

When at length John quitted his bed, and was able again to move about, his time still passed heavily, for he suffered a good deal of pain, and a degree of fever that hung about him made him restless. After he had spent a portion of the day in reading, he felt a desire for some other employment, and often experienced a strong wish to have some one to talk to. This want, by no means an unnatural one, that of having a little companionship, led him to seek the society of the stable-yard; unfortunately there was no better to be found where

he was now living. He neither liked nor approved of the men there, especially after their total neglect of him; but he knew that he should derive a little amusement from what went forward among them. During the time he was confined to his room, he had reflected a good deal upon the sort of characters among whom he had been thrown, and he could not but own to himself that their conversation and example were producing anything but a good effect upon him. His sense of right and wrong was not so powerful as it had once been; and the oaths and bad language which had at first shocked and revolted him, he had learned to hear almost with indifference. His conscience grew troubled, and he almost made up his mind to leave his place as soon as ever he was sufficiently recovered to be able to do so.

But with returning health came self-confidence; and he said to himself, "why should I throw myself out of a good situation, because my fellow-servants are not all that they should be? I have no occasion to follow their example. Surely I am strong enough in my principles not to go wrong because others do. It might be long before I got such another easy place—no, I will stay."

There could not have been a better proof that John's reasoning was wrong, than his desiring to remain in a place where there was little to do, for his was a nature that required plenty of work in order to make him feel happy. From the time of his first coming to Millwood Hall, up to the present day, real happiness had been unknown to him. The idle life he led made him listless and dissatisfied; though at the same time he was unconscious of what gave rise to the uncomfortable feelings with which he was oppressed.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

WHEN John returned to the stable-yard after his forced absence, he found a new visitor there, who was none other than Master Lionel Chester, the son and heir of the family, who had been away from home for some time on a visit to his grandmamma. He was a stout well-grown child, of between five and six years of age, with a resolute will which was never more strongly displayed than in insisting upon his nurse's bringing him every day to his favourite haunt—the stable-yard. The child had a passionate love of horses, and he ran in and out among them, passing under their bodies and clinging round their legs in the most fearless manner imaginable. On first perceiving John, the little boy appeared to take a fancy to him, and went to him and took up a small silky-haired spaniel, a pet he always brought with him, to show the lad. He observed that John wore his arm in a sling, and inquired how he had hurt it.

John replied that the injury had been caused by a fall from a horse.

"Why, what a spoony you must be," exclaimed the child, "to let a horse throw you! Papa says he would not own me for his son if I ever let such a thing happen to me."

This speech was received with roars of laughter by the men who were standing about, while John appeared surprised and shocked.

All that the child said is not written down, for, sad to relate, a wicked expression was used with the word *spoony*, and this it was that caused such merriment among the godless throng who heard it.

Instead of being filled with horror at such language proceeding from infant lips, they applauded the little boy, calling him a "fine fellow," "a brick," and various other cant names betokening their vulgar admiration of him. The child meanwhile strutted about, chattering and playing with the men, and picking up their slang phrases, and far worse, learning the blasphemous words with which they interspersed their talk. And as this went on day after day, John became really unhappy about it. He remembered how his mother had cautioned him, when a little child, about using words improper, and inspiring him with a dread of the fearful consequences attendant upon doing so. She told him of the day of judgment, that awful day when every one, child or grown-up person, would be called to account for every "idle word" they had spoken. Here, he thought, was a little human being, an heir to everlasting life, growing corrupt without any helping hand being stretched out to save him from perdition. Could his parents, John reflected, possibly know of the peril to their child's eternal welfare he was encountering? He thought it never could be that they were aware of it; and then came the wish to tell them of what was passing, but remembering what ill-success had attended his well-meant warning at Belmont, he shrunk from the idea of interfering. Then again his conscience upbraided him for shrinking from a duty for fear of unpleasant consequences to himself. At last the thought struck him, that he would speak to the nurse, who always brought the child into the stable-yard, and waited there as long as it was his pleasure to remain. John was not very hopeful that he should do much good in that quarter, for the woman appeared to enjoy herself as much as her little mastre, idling her time and gossiping with the men; still he

determined to make the attempt to open her eyes to the dangerous position in which her young charge was placed. It was of no avail; at first, the nurse paid no attention to what John said, appearing not to catch his meaning, but when she did, she first laughed and said the child was learning to be manly, and then that if he did pick up anything that was not quite right, he would "know better when he was older." John gravely reminded her of those words in the Bible, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it," and was proceeding to tell her that the little boy's character was fast forming for evil, when she turned abruptly away, bidding him mind his own business, and not set up to teach his elders.

Further appeal to this woman would have been useless, but as John had a good point to gain he resolved that if it was possible he would not give it up. His next attempt to get the child away from persons who were doing him so much harm was made upon the little boy himself. John's notion was to induce the young gentleman to go with himself into the fields, and by amusing him there to keep him away from the stable-yard.

One fine morning, as soon as Master Chester made his appearance, and was rushing with his accustomed eagerness up to one of the stables, John met him and asked him whether he would not like to go and see the pretty flowers in the fields, and to gather primroses and violets. But the child had not the least taste for rural pleasures, and cared nothing for flowers, and though John did his best to describe the beauties of nature, he could not excite any desire in his listener to witness them.

The page was quite at a loss what to do, when seeing the little spaniel, who was jumping about to



attract the notice of her young master, he exclaimed,

"I wonder how Floss would like to go and hunt the rabbits in yonder field, and have a run down by the side of the wood, and get a peep at the squirrels jumping from tree to tree?"

Here, at last, John was fortunate; he had hit upon a subject full of interest for the young gentleman. Field-sports were as much to his taste as horses, and eagerly grasping the page's hand, and calling Floss to follow, the child hastened out of the stable-yard and took his way to the adjacent meadows. Here the time passed rapidly away; the spaniel hunted about, and the little boy ran and hallooed and jumped hither and thither in the full exuberance of health and spirits. It appeared endless amusement to him, the seeing Floss chasing the rabbits while he ran after her. Then he was delighted with watching the squirrels as they bounded from tree to tree; and then with discovering birds' nests, while from time to time a lizard would be espied in the little stream that ran beside the wood. Even looking for snails' shells afforded amusement; and John contrived with his lame hand to show how rush-baskets could be made to contain them.

At first the nurse followed after the page and Master Chester, but finding the child was in safe hands, she left him to pursue his own gratification, while she returned to her amusing gossip in the stable-yard.

Mr. Chester was very fond of his little boy, and when the child came into the drawing-room to see his parents, his father was entertained by listening to his son's rapturous accounts of the amusements the page had been the means of procuring for him in the fields. John had long been in the habit of

taking Master Chester into the fields, yet it so happened that the page had scarcely seen his master since his accident. One morning, as Mr. Chester was on his way to the stable, he encountered John, and asked him how he was. John replied that he was recovering from his accident as speedily as he could hope, at the same time he expressed his regret that he had been so long without being of any use in the establishment. Mr. Chester bid him not concern himself about that, adding that he had been very kind and obliging to his little boy. "Perhaps," continued the gentleman, smiling and pointing to John's arm, "you like playing the part of nursemaid better than having anything to do with horses?"

This observation did not please John, for he was a manly, courageous lad, and he thought it implied that his master considered him effeminate. Putting aside, however, any private feeling, he joyfully seized an opportunity he had long wished for, that of making Mr. Chester acquainted with what had occurred in the stable-yard respecting his young son.

Looking steadily up into his master's face, John said,

"I carried Master Chester, sir, off into the fields, that I might take him out of sight and hearing of those who were doing him a great deal of harm, and from whom he was learning bad language and to—swear."

John could not tell what effect this communication had upon his master, nor even if it was heard, for a favourite racer being led by at the moment, Mr. Chester's attention immediately became engrossed by it. But all doubts on the subject were soon removed from John's mind, for the little boy appeared

no more in the stable-yard, and on inquiring the reason a few days afterwards, he learned that Master Chester had been sent off to a preparatory school for young gentlemen, kept by some excellent ladies living about thirty miles from Millwood Hall. John was rejoiced to learn this news, and he could not help experiencing a feeling of considerable gratification, in thinking that most likely he had been the cause of removing the child from a situation so fraught with danger.

In process of time John recovered the use of his hand, and he resumed his former trifling occupations, and drove his mistress out, and rode the horses to exercise as he had done before his accident.

A time was now approaching that filled the whole establishment with excitement. Some important races were about to come off, and nothing was heard among the men, from the master to the lowest man about the stables, but observations upon "the favourite," what horses were to start for the cup, and who was likely to enter a more winning one than Mr. Chester's "Rainbow." A passion for betting seized every one, not only the master and his guests in the dining-room, but the men in the servants'-hall, the kitchen, and the stables; even the maids were laying wagers of gloves and ribbons. John, who was unhappily too easily led astray, caught the infection, and talked as loudly as any one about what horse he should bet upon. He was not going to the races, and he had never seen any of the horses except his master's, which were entered to run, so that all he could know about them was gathered from the conversation of the men around. He was quite at a loss how to decide. It was no use to bet on "Rainbow," for all the men did that from feeling assured he would win. At last he was on the

point of fixing. A jockey in high repute, as a judge on those matters, happened to call to see the head groom, and after a short conversation with his friend, talked to John, and told him in a confidential whisper what horse he ought to bet upon, saying that he would win to a "dead certainty if he did."

The boy, glad to be thus advised, was on the point of laying down his money (his opponent was the head groom), when a look of intelligence passing between that man and the jockey excited his suspicion that he was going to be unfairly dealt with. It was the slightest possible gesture, but it did not escape John's notice, and having heard a great deal about trickery and cheating among sporting men, he drew back and said he would not bet at all. Upon further reflection it appeared strange to him that the jockey should have told him, a stranger, which horse would probably be the winner in preference to his friend, the head groom; and he also called to mind the warning his mother had given him against wagers of any kind, which she said was only another kind of gambling, and exceedingly wrong.

Thankful for his own escape, he turned his attention to a simple country lad, with a wish to put him on his guard against sharpers, for such he felt convinced were the men who wanted to make him bet in order to win his money. The youth in question, Luke Bond by name, was employed about the premises to fetch and carry, and do odd jobs, such as the other men thought beneath them. He was good-natured, but wholly inexperienced in the ways of the world. He had told John, with great glee, that he had a sovereign saved up out of his wages, and that he was going to give it to his mother for a purpose for which she was in great want of money. John, with much earnestness, cautioned Luke against

betting: he had seen the jockey and his friend fix their eyes upon the youth, and he felt convinced they would endeavour to get his money from him. John had just given his warning when he was called away, and on his return he was vexed to find that Luke had wagered his sovereign on a horse of whom the poor youth knew nothing. John regretted the circumstance, but Luke was all confidence that he should win: "and if I do, as I know I shall," said he. "I shall take mother two sovereigns instead of one!"

The next day was "The Race Day," and the next after that Luke was informed that "his horse had been beaten, and that he had lost his money."

John found Luke weeping bitterly in a corner of one of the stables. "All is over!" cried he, as John appeared. "Oh! that I had taken your advice! My poor mother, it will break her heart when she hears I have no longer the sovereign I promised to give her! She needed it for such an important purpose."

When Luke was a little more composed, John learned from him what the money was for. Mrs. Bond, Luke's mother, was a widow with a large family of young children. She was a sickly woman, and she and her family depended for their subsistence almost entirely on her eldest son Thomas, who by his diligence and good conduct supplied the place of the father of the family. In an evil hour the young man was persuaded by a friend to accompany him to a public-house, to hear some marvellous tales of battles related by a recruiting sergeant. Thomas got excited by the histories, and was induced to drink, and being wholly unaccustomed to fermented liquors, his senses became confused, and before he was aware of it he was enlisted as a soldier.

This was a dreadful blow to the widow, and every means was exerted to raise money enough to pay for a substitute for Thomas. But this would have been wholly impossible if it had not been for Luke's promised sovereign. This, with some small savings of Thomas's, and the disposal of some articles of furniture, afforded the requisite sum. Luke was to have gone that very day to carry his mother his money, his careful savings out of very low wages; all now lost through folly. Instead of this, he must now go and tell her a sad tale. He shrunk from the errand, and entreated John to bear him company and assist in breaking the sad news to his sick and widowed mother.

John kindly consented to this proposal, and having obtained leave to go out for an hour or two, the youths set out for Mrs. Bond's cottage. On their way Luke spoke of his late father. He had died in a drunken fit, he said, after having drawn shame and poverty on his family by a long course of intemperance. "It is his behaviour that has brought poor mother into such a low way," said he: "and now to think that Thomas, such a steady chap as he is, should have gone and got himself into such a scrape by drink! Don't you, John, ever 'follow after strong drink,' as the Bible says. It is the ruin of everything. I never touch a drop of strong liquor of any sort, and please God to strengthen my resolution, I never will, except I am ill and the doctor orders it me. And Thomas says the same, and always did say so, till the unlucky night he went to hear about the battles, and got caught for a soldier."

"Strong healthy lads like us don't want any stimulating drinks," said John; "they only stupefy and hurt the stomach."

John was prepared for a scene of distress when

Mrs. Bond should know that all her hope of retaining her eldest son at home was gone; but he little expected to be a witness of such intense sorrow as was displayed by the widow. She literally shrieked in her grief when she first heard the sad news; and then when she became rather calmer, she drew her little ones around her and mourned and wept over them, exclaiming from time to time, that their home, their food, their clothes and every comfort were lost to them for ever. And when Luke, who was hardly less concerned than herself, attempted to comfort her, she turned from him saying,

"This comes of horseracing and bad companions! Could you not have kept yourself to yourself? you promised me you would."

"Oh, mother!" exclaimed Luke, "I am so very sorry! I will never go wrong again. Do pray forgive me!" and the unhappy youth took his mother in his arms and pressed her to his heart. "I will be a comfort to you; you shall have every farthing of my wages."

"Poor Luke!" said his mother, won over by his kindness; "you meant well, but you were always an ill-judging lad."

During the latter part of the time that John was in the cottage, he retired to a table under the window, and sat down by it that he might not seem to obtrude on the sorrow of the family. Before him lay a Bible, which he opened, and his eyes rested on the words,

"Do good and lend, hoping for nothing again." Now John had a sovereign laid by, with which he had intended to make a long-wished-for purchase, namely, that of a strong compact box, with a patent lock, to hold his clothes and his small store of worldly goods. If he gave up this box, he might lend the money to the Bonds, and at once bring

their trouble to an end, and restore them to comfort and happiness. He put his hand in his pocket to ascertain if his sovereign was safe; he had had it about him ever since the morning before the races, when he had taken it from the place where he always kept his money secure, to be ready to stake in a bet—a folly from which he had been mercifully preserved. “Perhaps,” thought he, “the Great Disposer of events turned me from evil that I might have it in my power to do good to my fellow-creatures in distress.” His resolution was taken, and calling Luke to him, he put the sovereign in the lad’s hand, saying,

“Lend that to your mother, she is welcome to it for as long as she likes. I must be off myself directly, for the time we were to be away is just up, and do you follow as fast as you can.” He then hastened off, but the sound of Luke’s joyous shout, and the merry laugh of the children, reached his ear as he hurried along.

The following morning the servant boy was up early, and furnishing himself with a piece of wood, a hammer, and some nails, he repaired his old box; and perhaps, in all his after life, he never passed a happier half hour than he did over his work, thinking that by a sacrifice of his own gratification he had insured the comfort and happiness of a poor widow.

“Let every man do according as he is disposed in his heart, not grudgingly, or of necessity; for God loveth a cheerful giver.”

“Be merciful after thy power. If thou hast much, give plenteously; if thou hast little, do thy diligence gladly to give of that little; for so gatherest thou thyself a good reward in the day of necessity.”



## CHAPTER XIX.

AT Christmas, or a little before, John became sensible that a considerable change was taking place at Millwood Hall. A general dulness prevailed, no company arrived, the mistress kept close, the master made hurried visits back and forwards, and none of the preparation took place for passing that festive season in the true old English style of hospitality which hitherto had been customary. Presently several of the principal servants were discharged, carriages were sent away; and at last, to the astonishment of every one, the horses, without any reserve, were sold; the stable establishment was broken up, and the whole household put upon a plan of rigid economy. Even this was not all, for early in the year Millwood Hall was advertised for sale, and the few remaining servants, John among the number, had notice given them to leave their situation.

Mr. Chester had ruined himself by his passion for horse-racing. He had for a considerable time past been experiencing heavy losses; and at last, in a fit of desperation, he had staked the remnant of his fortune on a speculation which turned out ill, and he was deprived of everything he possessed, and there was nothing left for him but to retire to an obscure dwelling, and live upon a small jointure of his wife's. Here he had leisure to repent of his ill-spent life, and bitterly did he regret his wasted powers and time; the bad example he had set, and the utter carelessness he had shown as to the moral and religious welfare of his servants. One positive good, however, attended this gentleman's reverse of

fortune, and that was, his determination to educate his little son in habits far different from what had been his own; to teach the child that there were objects more worthy of his love than dogs and horses; and pursuits infinitely better to follow than horse-racing and field sports.

Our servant boy was again out of place.

After the first regret at being thrown out of employment, he experienced but little sorrow at quitting Millwood Hall. He had no attachment to his master and mistress, and none of his fellow-servants had inspired him with sentiments of regard or friendship; and he had too much good sense not to be aware that in the situation he had lately filled his mind had degenerated, and his habits were forming for indolence, or for a love of useless occupations.

Mrs. Hartley had taught her son to practise self-examination, and, however he might at times neglect this excellent mental exercise, he never failed to recur to it on every important period of his life.

Finding himself at liberty, with a little cash in his pocket, he determined upon paying his sister a visit, for it was a long time since he had seen her, and he felt a strong wish to be with her again for a little while. Betsey was now living in another place. The kind lady who had received the young girl into her service upon her mother's death was gone abroad for the benefit of her health. Betsey's present mistress was not an obliging person; and John, on arriving at the village of Hedgley, where she lived, found he could enjoy but very little of his sister's company. This being the case, he resolved upon passing one day of the short holiday he allowed himself in visiting his native place, which he felt a strong desire again to see. Hedgley was distant from Downton sixteen miles, but by rising

very early John contrived to reach the old town a little before noon. Passing quickly along High-street, and through Cross-street and Queen-street, not stopping to look at any of his favourite haunts, and only just glancing at the market-place, and up at the handsome church close to it, he made his way at once to the obscure street where stood the house in which his mother had lived, and in which he and his sister were born. Arrived at it, he stopped, and, gazing earnestly outside, wished to enter; and while he was debating whether he should be considered impertinent or not by the present occupier if he asked to do so, the door was opened by Mrs. Miller, its mistress.

John touched his hat by way of apology at his apparent rudeness in standing staring in at another person's dwelling.

Mrs. Miller, who had come forth expecting to see some one else, said,

"I beg your pardon, sir, but I thought it was the squire's page come about the work, and he does not like to be kept waiting a moment at the door."

John, who could hardly forbear a smile at this respectful mode of address, exclaimed that Downton was his native place, and that he had come to take a look at the house where his mother had lived.

"Mrs. Hartley, you mean," said Mrs. Miller; "every one speaks well of her; and you, then, are her son? Walk in and welcome."

John followed her in, and eagerly looked round upon each familiar object. All seemed just the same as when he went away; the mantelpiece, the dresser with the shelves over it, the corner cupboard, the fireplace—all were unchanged. He looked *through* the window beside which his mother used

to sit at work, into the little garden beyond, which had been such a never-failing source of delight to his sister and himself. The arbour was still standing, but the shrubs around had grown taller. The door was open at the foot of the stairs, and he thought how often he had climbed them, a happy careless child, to his bed, and how in later times he had crept up and down in fear and trembling, when his mother lay, as he dreaded, on her death-bed.

Thoughts of his lost parent crowded on his mind—her tender love of him, her watchful care to guard him from evil, and her hopes and prayers that he should turn out well. He sat down and covered his face with his hands, and reflected whether if she were now in that room, and he was standing before her, she would approve of him, and call him as she had been used to do, her “good, innocent-minded boy.” His conscience answered, “No.” A bitter pang shot through his heart, and he uttered a half-suppressed groan.

“You are thinking of your lost mother maybe,” said Mrs. Miller, kindly. “I was like you once; I felt just the same when I came home from my first service, and found my mother dead and gone. It is no use fretting; our mothers are angels in heaven now; and all we who are left have to do, is to try and follow them.” Then producing a plain seed-cake, and cutting a slice, she offered it to John, telling him to eat it, and that it would do him good.

John complied more out of a wish not to offend by a refusal, than from inclination. After a time he entered into conversation with the good woman, and made many inquiries respecting the neighbours, and other inhabitants of the place about whom he was interested. But above all he was desirous of learning some particulars regarding his former master

and mistress, Mr. and Mrs. Anderson. Concerning these last-named individuals, Mrs. Miller was luckily well informed. Mr. Anderson, she said, was so much respected for his honourable conduct at the time the bank stopped payment, that his affairs were now in a very good state; still he did not live in so grand a house as the one he formerly occupied, but in a smaller one. "It is," said Mrs. Miller, "what my husband, who is a mason's foreman, calls a semi-detached house."

"I understand," said John, "two houses only divided by a party wall, so that they look like one. And Mrs. Anderson, the mistress who used to be so kind to me, how is she?"

"Better than she has been," replied Mrs. Miller, "but I fear she is not strong. She is, however, very happy, and they have two sweet little children."

John said he should very much like to call and see the family, if it would not be considered taking too great a liberty. Mrs. Miller said they (meaning Mr. and Mrs. Anderson) were such kind people, she was sure they would not; and, added she, "now I think of it, I heard last night that they are in want of a servant boy. You, I suppose, are in place now?"

John replied that he had just quitted a service, and was about to look out for another, and that he should like above all things to live again with Mr. and Mrs. Anderson; and, starting up, he bid Mrs. Miller good morning, with many thanks for her obliging behaviour, and took his way to Woodend, a little village about three miles from Downton, just beyond which was situated some houses called Rosa Place, at No. 1 of which the Andersons lived.

As John was walking briskly along, a gentleman on horseback, whom he recognised as his former

master, overtook him. The page raised his hat, and bowing respectfully, Mr. Anderson returned the salutation, and was riding on, when something in John's appearance made him slacken his pace.

"Good day, my lad," said the gentleman; "have you travelled far to-day?"

"I came from Hedgley this morning, sir. I wanted to have a look at the old place, especially my mother's late dwelling. I perceive you do not remember me," said the boy, colouring deep with the pleasure of this meeting. "I am John Hartley, who used to live with you when you resided at the Elms."

"Oh! John, is it you?" exclaimed Mr. Anderson. "I thought you were some one I ought to remember, but you are so grown I did not know you."

"It is above two years since I lived with you, sir; I was then only fourteen, I am sixteen now. I have seen great changes since I last saw you, sir."

"You mean, I suppose," returned Mr. Anderson, "that you have lived in several different places."

"Yes, sir," replied John; "and my poor mother, did you know that she was dead?"

"I heard the sad news," replied Mr. Anderson, "and I was sorry for it. How is your sister Betsey? she was always a good girl."

John answered to this obliging inquiry, and then asked after his former mistress, and added that he was on his way to call and inquire after her and the family, if it was not presuming too much. Mr. Anderson told the lad that his wife would be glad to see him, and that he must stop and dine.

On arriving at Rosa Place, he found the servants just sitting down to dinner, and joining them as desired, he enjoyed a hearty meal, and felt very

much refreshed. He was still sitting at the table talking to the servants, when the kitchen door was pushed open, and a little boy about three years old put his head in, and looking round, his eyes rested on John, to whom he said :

“ When you have dined, come speak to mamma.”

John rose and followed the child into the parlour, where Mrs. Anderson was sitting holding an infant on her lap. She received her former young servant very kindly ; and on her asking him with interest several questions about himself, he was led on to give her some account of the places where he had lived, and a slight history of the masters and mistresses whom he had served. While he was still speaking, Mr. Anderson came in, and asked John, as he was out of place, and he himself in want of a servant boy, whether he would like a re-engagement. John replied that nothing would give him greater pleasure ; and Mr. Anderson was proceeding to settle about wages when Mrs. Anderson interposed, saying :

“ I am afraid, John, that after having lived in such lively situations, and with such gay people as you have chiefly done since we parted with you, you would find our place dull, and not altogether suited to your taste ; you had better take time to consider whether you would really like to live with us or not.”

John said he wanted no time for consideration, and declared that the only period in which he had felt really happy since he quitted the service of the Andersons, was the few weeks he had lived at Mrs. Temple's, and hers, he added, was far from a lively situation. He had scarcely finished speaking, when the child, William Anderson, said :

“ You stop.” He had been standing with his

little chin resting on his mamma's work-table opposite to John, listening and looking at him all the time he had been talking. It is not likely that the little boy understood much of what was said, but he was pleased with the expression of John's countenance. Children are good judges on that point. John was very fond of children, and however busy he was, or however much in haste, he was invariably kind and gentle with them. In this he had not much merit, owing to his great love for these little ones; but had he felt otherwise towards them, it was his *duty* to act as he did.

Many servants are cross and impatient with the younger members of the families in which they live. This ought never to be. Grown-up persons should remember, when it happens that their tempers and patience are occasionally tried by children, that they themselves were once as young, and needed the care and gentle treatment through which they had grown up to be strong and vigorous.

It was settled that John was to live at Rosa Place, and very happy he was in his old situation. He had employment to occupy several of his morning hours; he had time to work in the garden, and in the evening he had a little leisure to himself. He joined once more in family prayer, and listened with satisfaction to the short expositions of the Scriptures, which either his master or mistress read every night. John began to feel again as he had done in his earlier years, and he experienced that delightful sense of repose that is wont to arise from dwelling in a right-minded and orderly family.

Little William was along with John a good deal. Mrs. Anderson having ascertained that her child would sustain no injury, and learn no bad words or ways from the servant boy, was glad to have the



nursemaid partly relieved of her care of him, as it enabled her to devote more time to her mistress and the infant. This was desirable, as Mrs. Anderson was in delicate health.

The little boy was very friendly with John; he kept with him when he was at work in the garden, and trotted in and out the rooms beside him when he was dusting the pictures, rubbing the furniture, and putting things in order, as he always did when the housemaid had washing or ironing on hand.

John was as well pleased as the child, whom he delighted to make happy. He put up a swing in the coach-house for his "tiny master," as he called him, made him a little cart to drag stones and weeds about in, and constructed a few other playthings for him, which, though somewhat rough, gave great satisfaction to him whom they were meant to please.

Early in the spring, Mrs. Anderson, who for some time had been out of health, became so seriously indisposed, that, in obedience to the command of her doctor, she left home for some weeks to try change of air. The two children and the nursemaid went with her. The housemaid had married and gone off a short time before, and her place was not to be filled till the return of the mistress of the family, so that all who were left in the house was the master, who was but little at home, John, and the cook, a grave elderly woman.

The servant boy felt this change very much; especially he regretted the loss of the dear little boy whom he loved, as he often said, as if he had been his own brother. Time hung heavily on John's hands, and after a little while he could not but own to himself that he found his place very dull. He had plenty of leisure, and it would have been a fine

opportunity to have improved himself, if he had possessed the energy or inclination to do so. His considerate mistress before she went away had left him out several books that he might have studied with profit; not books that were calculated to make him learned, but such as contained information that no Englishman, whatever his rank in life, should be without. One work was a short and plain history of the laws and government of the country of which he was a native. Another contained a brief history of the kings and queens who have reigned over it. And a third gave an account of the colonies which have added to its wealth and importance. There were beside a few volumes of voyages and travels, of naval and military battles, together with some religious works, written in a pleasing and popular style. None interested John, or rather he did not take the trouble of looking at them. He considered himself too uneasy in his mind to do anything but lounge idly about, after he had performed the few duties that remained to him in so reduced a household.

One Sunday evening he was more than usually oppressed with a sense of dulness, for he was left entirely alone in the house. His master and the cook were gone to church. Too restless and uncomfortable to employ himself, John wandered about from room to room, now sitting down, then getting up and looking out of the window, but not finding amusement in anything. He thought for a moment he would write to his sister (he owed her a letter), and give her an account of a sermon he had heard in the morning, which had interested him; then he thought he would write a copy, as Betsey had said his writing was not so good as it used to be. But he did not do either, he had no resolution to set

about anything that required exertion. He went into the hall, and opening the back door, sat down upon the stone steps that led into the garden.

He had better have employed himself. Any occupation, even the most distasteful, would have been better than idleness.

The Tempter was at hand.

How true are those lines of the hymn—

“Satan finds some mischief still,  
For idle hands to do.”

John had sat about five minutes, and was on the point of falling asleep, when he was roused by a shrill whistle, and looking up, he saw at an open window in the adjoining house, a youth whom he recognised to be the son of his mother's old neighbour, Master Pool.

“How are you, John?” said Sam. “Did you know I was living next door? I am only very lately come. I knew you were here, for I saw you go out the other day. I suppose you are like me—left at home while the other servants are gone to church. Where is Mr. Anderson?”

“Gone too,” replied John.

“Then you are all alone,” said Sam. “Come round, and I will come down stairs, and we will have a nice chat. I can't come to you, for the old woman (meaning the lady with whom he lived) might wake up at any moment from her after-dinner snooze and ring the bell, and she would be precious angry if I was out of the way.”

“I must not leave the house either,” said John.

“Well, then,” said Sam, “I must come to you, let the consequences be what they will. I am tired to death of my own company.”

“I cannot let you in,” said John; “master de-

sired me neither to go out myself nor admit any one into the house while he was away."

"And do you stand such tyranny as that?" asked Sam.

"I must obey orders," said John.

"Yes," replied the other youth, "if you are likely to be found out by not doing so. But who, I should be glad to know, would ever discover that we two, neighbours' sons, had been together this dull Sunday evening? And besides, where is the harm of it?"

"No harm," replied John, "I dare say, except, as I said before, orders must be obeyed."

"Well, thank goodness," exclaimed Sam, "I am not such a *Soft*. Father has taught me better than that. I have learned the rights of man. I will be no man's slave."

"I don't think you have learned one right, at any rate," said John, gravely; "the right that a man has to have what he pays for."

"I don't know what you mean," said Sam.

"It is plain enough, I think," returned John; "when a gentleman purchases service, that is, pays wages for it, he has a right to employ it as he likes. I heard my mother tell your father that years ago. As to being a slave, I never had a holiday refused me, wherever I have lived, if I asked for it at a reasonable time."

"You had to ask," said Sam; "you could not go away just when you liked."

"No; and I do not know who can," replied John. "I am sure gentlemen often cannot. It strikes me that sometimes they are not even as well off as servants in respect to holidays. Now there is my master wishing to go and see mistress, who is ill away from home, and he has not been able to get away a single day from the bank but once since she

has been gone. And is it not the same with lawyers and doctors? However they may desire it, they hardly ever dare take a holiday."

"They could if they liked," said Sam; "they are their own masters."

"No," answered John; "necessity is their master, and a very severe one too; for if they run away from their business, their business will run away from them; and then what are they to do?"

To this query John received no answer, for Sam had disappeared from the window. He was not sorry, for as a child he had never been very friendly with his neighbour's son, and now that the youth appeared to have imbibed his father's wrong-headed notions, John felt still less inclined to like him.

Neither was there any great degree of liking on Sam's side; but just then he considered John's company better than none; besides, he took a pleasure in combating the lad's "poor-spirited notions," and it would have afforded him a malicious gratification if he could have induced John to disobey his master. For these reasons, therefore, he quitted his station at the window, which was too far off to carry on a conversation pleasantly, and came down and mounted a tree which stood close against the partition wall that separated Mr. Anderson's garden from that belonging to the adjoining house. When he had settled himself to his satisfaction, he called to John, and laughing said:

"You did not expect to see such a fine bird up in this tree, I dare say. Come nearer; there was no talking at such a distance."

John did as he was asked, when Sam, lowering his voice, said, "I suppose you have heard the Downton news?"

John replied that he had not, and inquired to what Sam alluded.

"What! have you not heard?" exclaimed Sam; "why, everybody is talking of it; there is such an uproar as never was! And have you not heard of Mr. and Mrs. Allen? They used to be favourites of yours."

"I thought they were quiet, respectable people; what is the matter with them? I hope nothing bad has happened."

Sam nodded his head significantly. "I'll tell you, but I can't speak it out; some one might overhear. I wish I could get to you in your garden. I would put my foot on the top of this wall if it was not for the spikes, and then slide down, or I would jump from this tree, if I had not sprained my ankle a few days ago. I say, look, yonder is a short ladder lying beside the opposite wall; bring it here, and I can get down to you in a moment."

It is sad to relate, but at that moment John's sense of right forsook him. Eager to hear the Downton gossip, he furnished the means for its being imparted to him, by placing the ladder according to Sam's direction, and allowing him to descend into Mr. Anderson's garden. By so doing, John was as guilty of disobedience as if he had let Sam in at the house door.

The two youths repaired to a summer-house close by.

"I can hear the bell if *she* rings in this situation," said Sam, as he seated himself beside John. "Now we can enjoy a good talk; but first let us be comfortable," and pulling two cigars out of his pocket, he handed one to his companion.

"No, thank you," said John, drawing back. "I never smoke. I hate the smell of tobacco. I can't

think how you can think of such a thing as poisoning the air when there is such a sweet scent from that bed of violets coming to us."

" 'Hate the smell of tobacco,' that is good!" said Sam; "you won't hate mine. Mine are tip-top cigars, regular gent's cigars; I never use any others."

"It is all one, good or bad, I hate the smell," observed John; "but what a great deal of money they must cost you!"

"Don't they!" said Sam. "A precious deal my cigars stand me in during the year; but then the money is my own."

"It is a great pity you should waste it so," said John; "you should have been with me at a public lecture I went to last winter. You would not smoke again if you had heard it. Tobacco, the lecturer said, cost this country thousands upon thousands; and it was grievous to see how men spent their money upon an idle and injurious habit—the poor as well as the rich; and then he went on to explain fully how the health was hurt by it, and that the practice was greatly on the increase, and that in time our nation would become enfeebled and stunted in growth like some other nations."

"All vastly fine, I dare say," said Sam; "but I have smoked since I was ten years old, and I am not going to leave it off now for any lecturer in the world."

"You had much better," said John; "you look very much out of health; you are very short for your age; and it is my opinion that you did not jump down from the tree, because you had not the strength to do so."

"I told you I had sprained my ankle," said Sam, not very well pleased with John's remarks.

"Yes, you *told* me so, I know."

"I must smoke a cigar," said Sam, who did not feel quite comfortable just at this moment, and, taking out a lucifer match, he was proceeding to light one, when John stopped him, saying he would leave him directly if he did.

"Why, what a strange chap you are," said Sam; "why, you must be used to Mr. Anderson smoking."

"Master never smokes," said John, indignantly, "nor any of his brothers, nor any of the gentlemen who come here. Old Mr. Anderson used to call it a 'vicious practice'—and so it is. But come," added he, changing his tone to a more lively one, "what is all the news you have to tell me? I am impatient to hear."

"How green you are!" said Sam. "Why, did you not know I only said that to make you let me come over into this garden?"

"I am green," said John, "if it means believing that a person would not be so false-hearted as to invent a lie."

"Come, come," said Sam, "can't you take a joke? I have plenty to tell you that will amuse you quite as well as Downton gossip."

He then proceeded to give John an account of his sayings and doings in the seven places where he had lived during the last twelve months.

"Seven places!" exclaimed John. "Do you mean to say that you have been in seven places in one year?"

"To be sure," said Sam; "and who was to blame that I did not remain longer in any of them? The masters, to be sure. I was not going to stand being put upon and ordered about as I was by some of them. I told the last, who was more of a tyrant than the rest, that I was as good as he, and that if he did not choose to yield a point I was set upon, I



would be off. He was stubborn, and finished by calling me impertinent, and I took myself home, where I was for the last three months, father grumbling all the time at having to keep me. He said he did not like my coming home so often, that he had enough to do to maintain the rest of the family, and that I ought to stop in my places, and put up with what I did not like. A good idea that, when I have heard him preaching ever since I was a baby about the 'rights of man.'"

"I hope," said John, good-naturedly, after he had listened to all Sam's long and rambling talk, "that you will keep your present place."

"It is a woman I am living with now," said Sam; "there is no master, and—but," said he, stopping short, "I have talked so much I must have a cigar. My stomach is all of a fret; it feels just as it does of a morning till I have quieted it by smoking."

"You are ruining your health," said John; "you feel just like dram-drinkers; they must have a drop to ease their stomachs, then they want their drops larger and oftener, till at last they drop into their grave before their time—killed by the use of stimulants."

Sam made no reply, but got up to return over the wall, unable any longer, he said, to do without a cigar. He had just made good his retreat when a ring at the door-bell announced the return of Mr. Anderson from church. John seized hold of the ladder and laid it back in the place from whence he had taken it, frightened lest his master should discover his disobedience and be angry with him. He hastened back into the house to let in Mr. Anderson. The hall was all in darkness, for John, taken up with his ill-chosen companion, had omitted to light the lamp.

Mr. Anderson noticed the circumstance, but as it was a moonlight night he considered that most probably John on that account had left lighting the lamp to the last minute.

"Has any one been here, any one called at the house?" inquired Mr. Anderson, when John had supplied the hall with its customary light, and had brought his master's lamp to him.

"No one has called at the house, sir," was John's answer, and he turned away to hide a burning blush that dyed his cheeks at this evasion of the truth, and the recollection that rushed upon him that not half an hour ago he had reproved another for falsehood.

Mr. Anderson desired to have tea. John hastened away to bring it, but on going into the kitchen he found the fire almost out, and the water in the kettle cold. He snatched up some wood and threw it into the grate, thrust in the kettle-heater, and set the water on. But either the cold iron or the impatience with which he stirred the fire defeated his own ends. It would not burn. Mr. Anderson was a patient man, and always willing to make allowances for any little delay that might occur in receiving the attendance he required; but when he had waited above a quarter of an hour for so simple a meal as tea, he rang the bell and inquired the cause of the delay.

"The fire had got low, and the water does not quite boil," replied John; and he hastened back to the kitchen, having again deviated from the strict truth.

He was on his knees before the fire, puffing away with the bellows, when the cook came in, and found fault with him for not having the kitchen supper laid.

"I am busy about master's tea; I can't do two things at once," answered John, pertly.

The cook said nothing, but went up stairs to take off her bonnet, thinking that in the hours she had been away the servant boy might have found time to get supper ready.

Mr. Anderson got his tea at last, but it was doubtful if the water boiled after all. The beverage was flat and insipid, and not calculated to refresh a person after a long walk.

John could eat no supper, and went to bed in a very uncomfortable frame of mind.

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## CHAPTER XX.

MR. ANDERSON rose early the following morning, for he was going to snatch a few hours from business to visit his wife and children, from whom it was painful to be so long parted. On the previous Saturday he had brought home and planted in the garden a favourite shrub of Mrs. Anderson's, and wishing before he set out to ascertain if it was flourishing, he went to take a look at it. The shrub had been placed beside the wall, close to the spot where Sam had made his descent. The ground had been newly turned up by the place where the ladder had stood, and several footmarks were distinctly visible. Mr. Anderson looked at them with surprise, and, at a loss to account for what he saw, hastened in and called to John to know if he could tell what caused this unusual appearance in the garden-border. Thus questioned, there was nothing left for John but to

reveal the truth, which cost him a most painful effort, so convinced was he now of his improper conduct.

"And you told me," said Mr. Anderson, "that no one came while I was at church yesterday evening."

"Please sir," said John, in a voice so low as hardly to be heard, "I said no one had been to the house."

Mr. Anderson was silent for a few moments, then, fixing an earnest and somewhat sorrowful look on the boy, he said,

"When you were living with me two years ago, John, you would sooner have put your hand in the fire than have been guilty of such an equivocation. What difference is there between that and a lie?"

John could not reply, for a choking sensation in his throat made him unable to speak. He followed his master in silence to the house door, let him out, and then hastening up stairs to his own room, shut himself in and burst into tears.

Mr. Anderson's reproach had cut him to the heart, and he felt it all the more deeply because he knew that he deserved it. He was assured that he had fallen low in his master's esteem, and he was degraded in his own eyes. After a time, when he grew rather more composed, he thought over every part of the circumstances, which had been attended with so sad a result, and traced all up to idleness. He made a resolution to conquer this propensity, which had of late been gaining such ground upon him, and as a first effort in the right direction, he determined to take the first opportunity he could find to write to his sister. He felt, besides, that it would be a relief to him to unburden his mind, by telling her of his late misconduct. He would also beg her to write to him, and he would assure her of his sincere repentance. As he went down stairs to follow his daily work, he

remembered the ungracious manner in which, on the previous evening, he had spoken to the cook, a respectable woman, and many years older than himself. He found her very busy in the kitchen, taking the opportunity of master not dining at home that day to give it a thorough cleaning.

John offered his apology, and then inquired if he could assist her. The offer was gladly accepted, and he was setting busily to work when the cook, looking up at the ceiling, said she wished it could have been white-washed, but that it would take up too much time to find a man and have it done.

John replied that he would do it in "no time," and hurried off to the village to procure the materials; and so expeditious was he that before the cook had done cleaning and polishing her kitchen utensils the ceiling was finished, the shelves washed, and all ready for the things to be replaced. John had often white-washed his mother's rooms, for she had brought him up to be very handy, and had taught him to avail himself of every opportunity of learning anything that might prove useful some day or other.

In the present instance he gave great satisfaction, and was rewarded for his dexterity by the cook's best thanks.

At night, when his master returned, John went to him, and after expressing his sincere sorrow and repentance for his misconduct the preceding evening, begged for forgiveness. Mr. Anderson replied that he would not withhold his pardon; "but," said he, "you have lost my confidence, John." Then, seeing how truly unhappy the youth looked, he kindly and considerably added, "you must try all you can to regain it."

"I will, I will!" cried John, and from that time, as long as he lived, he never allowed himself to

deviate from the strict truth, nor practised the slightest deception towards those he served. In this proper conduct he was, no doubt, assisted by heavenly grace, for in all his prayers to his Almighty Father he entreated for His gracious aid to enable him to become a true and sincere character.

The servant boy had suffered such painful effects from his former idleness, that a great change took place in that respect. His leisure hours were now profitably employed in reading and studying the books from which he had before listlessly turned away. His interest in them grew so great that he was astonished that he could ever have found his time hang heavy on his hands. But this amusing occupation did not lead him to neglect his work: he was only the more diligent that he might gain opportunity for what he now delighted in; neither was he selfish in his enjoyment, for whenever the cook was inclined to listen, he read aloud to her.

Thus peacefully passed his days, when he learned the joyful intelligence that his mistress was nearly recovered, and that in about a week's time she, with the children, would be coming home. Though he had learned to be contented with his state as it was, there is no doubt but that with his mistress, and especially his dear "tiny master," at home, he would be much happier, and the boy was counting the hours till their return, when an event happened which entirely changed his prospects.

Mr. Anderson had an uncle, a younger brother of his mother's, to whom he was greatly indebted for several acts of substantial kindness. Mr. Colburn, that was the gentleman's name, was a man of good fortune, and unmarried, and he promised, should anything unforeseen ever happen to his nephew, to be a father to his children, and eventually provide for them

at his own death. Mr. Colburn was a warm-hearted, generous man, but unhappily of a passionate, dictatorial temper, and was apt to take offence if Mr. Anderson did not follow any advice he might give. He was still hale and hearty, a good horseman, and occasionally indulged in the pleasures of the chase. He had just treated himself to a hunter, and had sent word to his nephew that he would come down and enjoy the sport, the last few days of the season, in the neighbourhood of Downton, where a pack of fox-hounds was kept.

Mr. Anderson received his uncle gladly, but Mr. Colburn had only been one day at Rosa Place when he was called away on important business. His horse remained at his nephew's, and the groom was left behind in charge of it.

Mr. Colburn had been gone three days when his servant came to John, who was at his customary afternoon work in the garden, and informed him that his master would be back that day to dinner.

"I wish," said the groom, "that he had stayed away one day longer, his return puts me out greatly. Lady Carlton's servants have a grand party to-night, and I am invited, and I have not got all the things I want, and I must not be out of the way when master comes in."

"There are two or three hours to dinner yet," said John, without looking up, for he did not much like the man, owing to some observations he had occasionally dropped in conversation.

"Yes, but I have so much to do," returned the groom. "The woman who had my dress waistcoat to alter has not sent it back, and I have to go into the village after my thin boots and other things. I want you to oblige me by going to the woman and telling her I must have my waistcoat directly. She

lives only a mile off, up Long Lane, at a white cottage just before you come to Plough Farm, you know where I mean, do you not?"

John replied that he did, and thinking it would be ill-natured to refuse, said he would go. He knew Mr. Anderson would not have objected, had he been at home to have asked his leave, for he had desired the servant boy to be civil to his uncle's groom.

The groom said John could take Mr. Colburn's horse and ride, which would save time. John objected to this, saying he had better walk. But the groom replied that if he did he would only half oblige him, for the horse had not been taken out to exercise, and Mr. Colburn would be displeased when he found this was the case. A proposal was then made by John that he should execute the commissions in the village, and the groom ride himself after the waist-coat. But this would not do; no one could transact the business in the village but the groom himself, so John consented to the first arrangement, and it certainly was by no means disagreeable to him to have a ride. A bridle and horsecloth were put on to the hunter, and John set off on his errand. He went steadily along, arrived at the workwoman's cottage, delivered his message, and had got half way home when the sound of hounds in full cry met his ear. Then all at once the dogs ceased to give tongue, for they had lost the scent. On looking over the fields, John saw them beating about a small hazel copse, which was quickly surrounded by the hunters, in their scarlet coats, mounted on beautiful horses.

It was an exciting sight, a gate stood open just by where John was, and he rode into the field adjoining which was the one in which the hounds and sportsmen were gathered. John went forward, and, desirous of getting a still nearer view, he thought he



would jump his horse over the fence that separated the two fields. It was a very low hedge beside a small ditch, and it was no more to go over than to take a canter along the turf. He put his horse to it, but unfortunately it was what is termed a rotten fence, it gave way, and the horse stumbled and fell. The boy was thrown off, but he sprang up immediately unhurt; not so the horse, for in falling he struck against a stake in the bank and broke his knee.

John stood transfixed at sight of the mischief he had caused; he could hardly believe that in such a few moments an accident of so serious a nature could have occurred. He was very much grieved to have occasioned such an injury to Mr. Colburn's horse, and he trembled to think of the anger that would fall upon himself. He had no intention of doing what was wrong when he rode into the field; he did not propose stopping more than two or three minutes, and as to passing so trifling a barrier as the fence which had caused the fall of Mr. Colburn's horse, he did not for a moment think there was any objection to it, for when he was at Mr. Chester's, and went out with the grooms, they used to put the horses at small leaps as a part of their exercise.

John did not mount the hunter again, but led him slowly home. At the outer gate Mr. Colburn and Mr. Anderson were standing, waiting, no doubt, for his return. The groom was a little in the back-ground. As John came up, Mr. Colburn's quick eye instantly detected his horse's blemish, and with suppressed passion demanded what had happened. John told the exact truth. The groom, meanwhile, in a state of great trepidation, was making signs to John not to tell the errand on which he had been sent, which signs John saw not, and if he had they

would have been wholly unattended to, for nothing would have induced him to swerve in the least from a correct statement of the facts. The boy had hardly ceased speaking when Mr. Colburn flew into a fit of ungovernable rage: he dismissed his groom on the instant, and insisted that Mr. Anderson should do the same by John.

Mr. Anderson was very much concerned at the accident, and thought John far from blameless, but he did not think his fault deserved to be visited by so heavy a punishment as being turned from his place at a minute's warning. He expressed this opinion to his uncle, and endeavoured to moderate his anger; but all he said only served to increase Mr. Colburn's displeasure, till at last he turned from his nephew, saying that if he chose to retain in his service a boy who would take a visitor's horse out of the stable and go hunting on it, he might please himself, but that he (Mr. Colburn) would leave the house directly. This could not be allowed. Had Mr. Anderson been alone in the world he might have acted in a more independent manner, and trusted to time to bring his uncle to a more rational state of mind; but circumstanced as Mr. Anderson was, he would not risk seriously offending such a friend and benefactor of his family as Mr. Colburn had proved himself. John must therefore go.

It was with an aching heart that the servant boy took his departure from the place he loved so well, and the pain was all the greater from his dismissal occurring just at the time when he was so joyfully looking forward to the return of his mistress and the children after their long absence. As he slowly took his way to Downton, where he expected to see his sister, he thought over the circumstances that

had led to his discharge, and though at first he had thought that he had not done wrong, reflection showed him that he had been much to blame. He had no business, in the first place, to ride out on a horse that did not belong to his own master. Then, in the next, though he had been accustomed to let Mr. Chester's horses jump over fences, it was an exercise that he never ought to have put a horse to with whose qualities he was wholly unacquainted. Still all might have ended well if he had not yielded to the temptation of going out of his way to look at the hounds and the sportsmen. Certainly he had no intention of stopping above a minute or two in the fields, but, being there, all the sad results which have been narrated followed. Then rushed in full force upon his mind the loss he had occasioned Mr. Colburn, not only of his amusement, but of the sum of money which his horse had cost him. The price that gentleman had given for his hunter, John had understood, was sixty pounds, and now the animal could not be expected to fetch above half that sum, even if it did so much.

Thirty pounds, at least, John felt assured, he had been the means of making the gentleman lose whose horse he had rode without his permission. Could he, thought the boy, ever repay that sum? In time he might, and he immediately formed the resolution of laying by for that purpose every farthing he could spare of his wages. He had already a little money in hand, and this, as soon as he was again in service, he would put into the Downton Savings-bank as a beginning.

Betsey Hartley was just at present at Downton. She had written her brother word that she had been ill, and that her mistress had sent her away to be nursed. On meeting his sister, John was concerned

to find that her illness was in consequence of a fall from which she had received serious injury, so much so, that, though it was a fortnight since, she was only just beginning to move a little about. This, and John's sudden dismissal from Mr. Anderson's, took very much from the pleasure of the brother and sister being together, though they found it a consolation to tell each other their troubles, and John had the gratification of finding that Betsey highly approved of his honourable intention of saving his money to repair, as much as lay in his power, the mischief of which he had been the cause.

Betsey was lodging in the little street where her home had once been, and John, desiring to see as much of her as possible while on the look-out for a place, engaged a room near her. But, to his great sorrow, he was soon made aware how unfit she was to return to service at the end of a week, which she would be obliged to do on account of her money not holding out any longer than that time.

More than ever did John now lament that his misconduct had not only thrown him out of place, but that it also compelled him, from a sense of duty, to lay by everything he could save. He was very much attached to his sister, and willing to suffer any want or privation himself to benefit her, and a little reflection showed him that for the present his first duty was to assist her, and he accordingly forced on her a sum sufficient to pay her lodging and maintenance for another fortnight.



in finding a place, and was in want of his character, that he presented himself at the bank.

The situation which John had now in view was at a young gentleman's school at Downton, kept by Dr. Bull. Dr. Bull was a conscientious man and a good scholar, and had educated most of the boys in Downton and the neighbourhood. He was a strict disciplinarian, and by some persons thought to be not sufficiently indulgent to the errors of youth. When John told Mr. Anderson with whom he expected he was going to live, that gentleman said he would spare his old master the trouble of calling on him; and as banking-hours were just over, he would go direct to "Freshfield Academy," and give Dr. Bull any information he wished for respecting John's character. And, to spare further loss of time, Mr. Anderson told John to accompany him, and wait in the hall while he spoke to Doctor Bull.

The conference between the two gentlemen was not long; and on John being called in he was told he might consider himself hired on one condition. The condition was that Doctor Bull should be at liberty to cane him the same as if he was his own son, should John do anything to deserve chastisement.

"I have been very much plagued by servant boys," said the doctor; "and I will not hire another except on those terms."

"But," said Mr. Anderson, "the boy who now offers himself is sixteen; surely you would never think of punishing him in that way for any offence he may commit?"

"Sixteen or sixty," replied the doctor, sturdily, "it makes no difference; and if you, my lad, or your friends, make any objection to my conditions, say so at once, and take yourself off."

John could hardly forbear laughing, so ridiculous appeared to him the doctor's proviso; and so certain did he feel that he should never do anything to incur so childish a punishment, that he made no objection, and agreed to enter on his new service the next day.

John followed Mr. Anderson out of the house, and, after thanking him for the trouble he had taken on his account, ventured to make a request which he was very anxious to have granted. It was to be allowed to call that evening to see Mrs. Anderson and the little boy. Mr. Anderson gave a cheerful assent to John's request, and told him to come directly, and stay tea.

The moment the little boy heard of John's arrival, he ran to meet him, and held out his arms to be taken up. John was delighted to be thus remembered; and when he had spoken to Mrs. Anderson, he was further gratified by being allowed to take the child and keep him along with himself the chief part of the time he remained at Rosa Place. The cart John had made was broken, and this, with one or two other toys, he found time to repair, much to the little boy's satisfaction; and when John carried him into the parlour, when he went to bid Mr. and Mrs. Anderson good evening, the child clung round him, saying,

"Don't go—you shall not go—you shall live here;" and when he was told that John was going to live in another place, he burst into tears, and cried as if his little heart would break.

John had to make a great effort over himself not to cry too; and it is not quite certain that as he walked back to Downton he did not shed a few tears of great regret, on thinking that by his own ill-judged conduct he had shut himself out of the place which, above all others, he would have liked to retain.

But for this there was now no help, and what he felt he ought to do was to enter upon his new situation with a firm determination to do his duty to the best of his power.

Thus resolved, he did not find it difficult to give his new employers satisfaction, especially as there was nothing required of him that was not quite within his power to accomplish.

Mrs. Bull was a kind-hearted, pleasant woman, and her household was conducted with perfect order and regularity. John was constant in his attendance at church, and after a time he was occasionally allowed to be present at the examination of the Bible-class, and he with the other servants was always present when the doctor read prayers morning and evening in the schoolroom.

John's good temper and obliging manner soon made him a favourite with the young gentlemen of the establishment. He rose early and worked hard, and he was allowed now and then, with his master's permission, to join in a game of cricket or some other out-door amusements with the pupils. The servant boy's skill in carpentering was found of much use in building an arbour; and the little knowledge of gardening he possessed was turned to account in cultivating the small plots of ground that were appropriated to the sole use and pleasure of the young gentlemen.

John was frequently sent on errands into the town, and at such times the boys would charge him with a variety of commissions, all of which he cheerfully executed—having first obtained permission from Mrs. Bull to do so. John would never stop on an errand without leave, for he considered it was very unpleasant for his mistress to have to wait for what she wanted.

The young gentlemen themselves were occasion-



ally allowed the liberty of going into the town to make purchases; but notwithstanding this indulgence, some of them would seek to get out without leave, and at improper hours. John, who kept the key of the street gate at night, was often solicited to let some boy or other pass out, but though they tried fair words and bribes, nothing would shake the servant boy's allegiance to his master. Sixpences, shillings, even half-crowns were offered in vain; John was proof against all temptation; and he told the boys who thus tried to make him stray from the path of duty, that he never would be a party to anything underhand, or join in any deceitful practices. At last, so fully convinced were they of John's integrity, that after a time they gave up the attempt to gain him over to their wishes.

The year in which John entered Dr. Bull's service was a most important one at Freshfield Academy. Many years ago a rich gentleman, a native of Downton, made a bequest at his death in its favour. Trustees were appointed to pay, every third year, the sum of one hundred pounds to the head pupil, who had been educated in the school. The third year would expire at Midsummer, and there was very great excitement among the boys as to who would be fortunate enough to obtain the prize. The two foremost candidates, apparently, were Arnold and Bull. Bull was a nephew of the doctor's, who was very eager for the success of his relative, not so much on account of the value of the prize, as for the honour of obtaining it. Doctor Bull, as the master of the academy, considered that his own honour was involved in the success or defeat of one of his own name and family; and he was the more desirous that the youth now under his charge should succeed, for he was the third

nephew who had tried for the prize: the two others had failed to obtain it.

Bull was a steady, persevering lad, and if diligence and hard work could have insured success, he would have been certain of the prize. Arnold was a youth of a different stamp. Nature had endowed him with powers of a superior order; learning to him was no labour; the most difficult tasks seemed to come quite easy to him; but he wanted steadiness, and though a well-principled boy, his thoughtlessness would occasionally lead him to do things for which he would afterwards be very sorry.

During the last two or three months, a circumstance had occurred which made it a most important object for him to obtain the hundred-pound prize, and he pursued his studies with greater steadiness and diligence than he had ever exercised before.

John was a great favourite with this youth, and he interested himself in the servant boy's mechanical turn, and got him to teach him to make the little chairs out of pieces of carved wood, such as had given so much pleasure to Edward Anderson. In return, Arnold invited John now and then to come up into his room, and look at the models of churches and other public buildings, which he was very clever in cutting out of cardboard. Towards the close of the summer half-year, Arnold was very busy finishing a model of a Town Hall. The ground-plan and edifice were entirely of his own invention, and were ingenious and handsome. He had devoted more than usual care and attention on this model, for in this amusement, as well as in his studies, he was working for a prize. A new Town Hall was going to be erected at Downton, and a good-natured gentleman had promised to give five pounds to any resident

of the place, who should produce the best model. Arnold hoped he might obtain this prize, not only for the fame of the thing, but on account of the money, which would be most acceptable.

He had been working very hard all the afternoon of a half-holiday, when by an unlucky accident he destroyed an important part of the building. It was most vexatious, as at nine o'clock on the following morning all competitors for the prize were desired to send in their models: none were to be admitted after that time. What added to Arnold's trouble was, that after careful examination, none of the pieces of cardboard he had by him were large enough to replace the injured part; if they had been he could, by sitting up late and rising by daylight the following morning, have repaired the mischief. None of the boys, he was aware, possessed any of the material, and he, with his usual want of forethought, had omitted to lay in a supply. No doubt there was plenty of cardboard at the stationer's; but at that time in the evening there was no procuring it. It was not that the shop would be shut, but that Doctor Bull had imperatively declared that no one should go into the town any more that evening. There had been more than usual liberty allowed the scholars that day, and their master considered that they had had sufficient time and opportunity to procure and bring in everything they wanted. Arnold knew of old that there never was any turning Doctor Bull from his word when once passed; and could it have been possible to entertain the thought that he might be persuaded on this particular day to do so, all hope would have vanished on being told by one of the boys, who was also in great distress for something he had omitted to provide himself with, that on his having made application to go out again, the doctor

had been very angry, and not only repeated his command, but had ordered that none of the servants should on any pretence leave the house that night.

Arnold was greatly disappointed and mortified at the thought that all his pains and trouble would now turn to no account. He paced up and down his room in an excited state, and then sat down to think if there was no possible means of obtaining what he desired. One, and only one chance presented itself to his mind, and that he owed to himself was but a poor one. It was to try and persuade John to go out, and procure at the stationer's the material he was in need of, and without which he could not compete for the prize. With this faint hope he went down stairs, and seeking John, brought him up to his room. After pointing out the accident that had happened to his model, and stating his hopes and fears on the subject, Arnold told John what he had sought him for, and entreated him to comply with his request.

John civilly but firmly refused to do what he was asked, for it was wrong.

Arnold tried all his powers of persuasion to induce John to do what he requested; he pointed to the model, and remarked upon the time and pains he had bestowed upon it, the hopes he had entertained of gaining the prize; and as a still more powerful inducement, he promised, if successful, that the servant boy should have a share of the five pounds. But it was all in vain; John was not to be moved.

Arnold became unreasonable, and was displeased with John.

"It is ill-natured of you to refuse," said he; "what possible harm can it do, your just stepping out at the yard gate, and running off to the shop, and getting me what I want? No one would miss

you; you need not be gone ten minutes. Now say do you think any one would know it?"

"Perhaps no person would know of my disobeying orders," replied John, "but my conscience won't. I assure you, Master Arnold," continued he in gentle tone of voice, "I would gladly assist you if I could. I think your model beautiful, and that it is a great pity that you should lose the chance of a prize; and if I could help you by any inconvenience or even any pain to myself, I would; but I cannot betray the confidence my master reposes in me."

"Is the gate locked?" asked Arnold.

"Yes," replied the servant boy.

"And the key is still in your possession, I suppose?" continued Arnold. "You could have difficulty then in getting out?"

"Not any?" replied John.

There was a pause of a few moments; and then Arnold said,

"You will not disobey for conscience-sake; you are right, John, and I am wrong for having tried to persuade you to do so. My excuse must be my anxiety about my model, and you must forgive my petulance."

"Oh! don't mention *that*," said John; and he went off, much pleased to have an interview ended which had been attended with no little pain to himself, disagreeable as it for him to appear ill-natured especially to any one he liked so much as he liked Master Arnold.

When the young gentleman again found himself alone, he went to his model and tried against it, first one piece of cardboard and then another, hoping that he might by some contrivance or other make one of them do. But they were all, as he had before discovered, too small. Then he began to lament again.

and regret his ill-fortune; and then he turned over in his mind anew the possibility of procuring what he wanted. He had better have kept away from his toy, and have sat down and meditated upon what the true-hearted boy who had just left him had said on the subject of disregarding the orders of those whom we are bound to obey. Had he done so, the evil that entered his heart would have found no place. Bad actions too often follow bad thoughts. If, when an improper thought enters the mind, it is not kept down, but allowed full liberty to dwell there, it frequently leads to conduct productive of very unhappy results.

Arnold could not bear his disappointment patiently; and as he stood chafing and fretting beside his unfinished model, improper thoughts arose in his mind respecting the master under whose authority he had been placed by his parents. "What harm," thought Arnold, "could come of a boy going into the town once more to procure something he had forgotten, as was the case with one of his schoolfellows? Dr. Bull had refused to let him out, and all others also that evening. It was very tyrannical of his master. He had no right to tyrannize over the boys, but as he had done so, he himself would endeavour to elude observation, go out, and bring in what he wanted."

In accordance with this unprincipled determination, he crept cautiously down-stairs, stole along the hall to the front door, which he knew would not yet be fastened, opened it without noise, closed it gently after him, and ran off to the stationer's shop. There he was detained longer than he expected, for the precise article which he wanted could not immediately be produced; and when at last he obtained it, and hastened back in terror lest he should be too late, he found the house-door fastened. What could he do?

For a moment he was in despair. There was a window beside the door, which also led into the hall, perhaps that was still unfastened—he tried it; it was. He threw up the sash, leaped in, bounded across the hall, and was rushing up-stairs to his room, when Dr. Bull opened his study door and came out. It was then dusk, and Arnold felt sure that at the distance he was off, the doctor could not discover who it was that was thus hurrying away. But this feeling of security did not hold good respecting another individual who also came into the hall at the same moment. This other was John. He was on his way to close the shutters of the hall window, at the moment Arnold ran by, and was so near him that the young gentleman's coat brushed him as he passed.

Dr. Bull perceived John, and was aware that in the situation in which he was, he must have seen and known who it was that ran up-stairs.

Dr. Bull was that evening engaged in a very deep study, and not wishing to have his thoughts disturbed, he merely looked towards the open window, and desired John to shut and fasten it. The master did not doubt but that one of his scholars had been out on trespass, but he did not then seek to know which, nor enter upon the subject, reserving it till the morning, when a thorough investigation would take place, and the name of the culprit be disclosed.

## CHAPTER XXII.

AT dawn of day the following morning John was awoke by some one shaking him gently in his bed, and calling softly on his name. He rubbed his eyes and looked up to see who it was who was disturbing his slumbers, and he beheld Master Arnold, looking pale and wretched, standing beside him.

"Oh, John!" said he; "I am come to you in the greatest distress of mind, to beg you not to tell Dr. Bull that it was I who went out last evening. At present he does not know."

"I must tell if master asks me," said John, only half awake.

"Oh! in mercy," exclaimed the young gentleman, "do not. Wake up, John, sit up in your bed and listen to what I will tell you."

The tones of deep grief in which these words were uttered fairly roused John, and he did as requested. Arnold then imparted to the servant boy the following particulars, interrupted by frequent bursts of sorrow, and strong self-condemnation.

Mr. Arnold, the father of the youth now being educated at Freshfield Academy, had not prospered in his profession till within the last five years, when, in consequence of a favourable turn in his affairs, he laboured so hard to make the most of it that he brought on a brain-fever. From this complaint he was now slowly recovering, but he was told that if he resumed his business under many months fatal results would ensue. In the mean time the family, consisting of, besides himself, his wife and two daughters,



had scarcely anything to live on. The greatest sacrifice of every comfort had been made by the mother and sisters of young Arnold, to enable him to remain at Freshfield Academy, both on account of his own advancement in life and the hope that he might obtain the hundred-pound prize, by which the means of subsistence for the family would be afforded.

Up to the evening before, this youth had every prospect of being the successful candidate; even Bull himself allowed it, but now all would be over should his disobedience of a positive order become known to the master. Three or four times before Arnold had transgressed in a similar manner. Something or other which it appeared indispensable for him to obtain had caused him to forget his duty, and he had broken out of bounds.

Dr. Bull looked upon this fault in so serious a light, both as setting his orders at defiance, and affording a bad example to the rest of the scholars, that he told Arnold, the last time that he had offended in this way, he would, on a repetition of such highly improper conduct, expel him from the school.

"I think," exclaimed the unhappy youth, when he had finished his narration, "that I must have been out of my senses to have acted as I did. It was such utter folly, for such a trifle, to run the risk of losing what is of such deep importance not only to myself, but to my family."

"Perhaps," said John, desirous of offering any consolation in his power, "Dr. Bull will look over your offence this time, as it is of such consequence to you."

"That he will not," broke forth Arnold; "if there was no other reason, were I out of the way the doctor's nephew would get the prize."

"But master is a just man, I suppose?" said John.

"He would not do anything unfair," replied Arnold; "but he would have no pity, and he prides himself upon never changing anything he has once said. If he finds me out he is certain to expel me. And oh! what a disgrace to be expelled! It would break my parents' hearts. My sisters too, who have denied themselves everything young girls like for my sake, how sad for them to have to blush for their brother! John," continued he, changing his tone from lamentation to that of earnest entreaty, "you will not tell?"

"How can I help it, Master Arnold? Sorry as I am for you, I cannot tell a lie."

Arnold replied that that was not what he wished; all he asked was that John would, when questioned, refuse to give up the name of the offender; and this the lad, after some hesitation as to whether it was right or not, promised to do.

Arnold thanked him with a burst of joy, and returned happy to his room. John's feelings were of a very different nature, for he knew that he should have to undergo severe questioning from his master, and incur his heavy displeasure by refusing to give up the name of the transgressor. More sleep was out of the question, so the servant boy sprang from his bed, and throwing open his window, was just in time to witness the glorious spectacle of the rising sun. On came the ruler of the day, first shooting up his golden rays, then bursting on the dazzled sight, lighting up the trees and fields and distant prospect, glancing on the river that danced in his beams, and carrying his beneficent presence into every corner of the earth, blessing alike the cottage

and the palace, the poor man and the rich. The swallows twittered under the roof of the house, the birds broke forth into joyous song, the lambs bleated, the cattle lowed, and all nature waked to life and joy.

"How good God is, how regular are all His dealings with man!" exclaimed John. "He never disappoints His creatures, sometimes sending His sun to light the world, and sometimes withholding it; but He has promised that, 'While the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease,' and we can rely on His word." Then, still looking on the scene before him, he added, "This would be indeed a pleasant world if man would imitate his Creator, be true and open, avoiding all falsehood and deceit, and loving his fellow-man as himself."

Finding, after he had performed his morning duties, that he had still much time before him, John took his Bible and enjoyed a long study of it in peace and quiet.

He trusted that he had done right in the promise he had given to Arnold, and when the time came he went down-stairs and set about his work in his customary orderly manner. The scholars assembled in the schoolroom, the lessons were set, prayers read, breakfast was over, and nothing was said of the transaction of the previous evening that had so greatly agitated two of the dwellers of Freshfield Academy, and both Arnold and John began ardently to hope that it was going to pass without notice.

But they were greatly mistaken; for just as the business of the day was about to commence, and all the boys were present, Dr. Bull, seated majestically before his desk, announced in a solemn voice that he

had something important to say. He then stated that, contrary to his positive orders that no one should leave the house the preceding evening, one of the pupils had, in direct disobedience, gone into the town. He now desired that the guilty individual would stand forth and declare himself.

No one stirred, no one spoke; there was profound silence. The doctor repeated his command, but with no better success; no one accused himself.

"Very well," said the doctor, "the boy who disobeyed my orders does not choose to speak. I gave him the opportunity of rendering his offence somewhat less by an open confession, but as he does not think fit to make it, I shall gain the information I seek in another way. There was a witness to the forbidden act, and he will declare the name of the transgressor. Let the servant boy be called in.

"John," said Dr. Bull, as the lad in obedience to the summons appeared at the schoolroom door, "come forward, come up to my desk." John advanced. "Now," continued the doctor, "I will tell you why I sent for you. You saw who it was that entered from the town by the hall window last evening. Name the individual."

"If you please, sir," replied John, firmly but respectfully, "I cannot do so."

"Why?" said the doctor, amazed.

"Because, sir," answered John, "I promised that I would not."

Dr. Bull stirred the cane that lay on the desk, then in a voice of thunder he exclaimed, "Promised! A servant boy promised not to tell his master what he desires to know?"

John remembered the conditions on which he had been hired. He turned pale, not from any fear of pain, that he could have borne unflinchingly, but he

considered that to be so punished was degrading. As a little boy at school, he had never been struck by his master. He could not endure the thought of being beaten, and was meditating how he could escape from the doctor without incurring his irretrievable anger, when the question was again repeated,

"Who was it that went out into the town contrary to orders, yesterday evening?"

"Pray, sir," said John, "excuse my not telling! I cannot break my promise."

"Then I will keep mine," said Dr. Bull; and before John was aware of it he had seized hold of him, raised the cane, and was about to strike, when a little boy rushed forward from among the other pupils, and running up to the master, cried out,

"Grandpapa, grandpapa, don't beat John! Surely you would not beat poor John, brave John, who saved the life of your little Teddy!"

The doctor's arm dropped, the cane fell from his hand, and John was released.

What the child said was perfectly true. John had rescued him from the attack of a fierce dog who had flown out upon him on his going too near the animal's kennel. The little boy was the orphan child of the doctor's beloved and only daughter, and at the time John saved the child from apparent destruction the grandfather was very grateful to his young servant.

Looking down at the little boy, and stroking his head, Dr. Bull said,

"You have saved John, Teddy; not but what he deserves punishment;" then turning to the lad himself, he said,

"There, go, get along with you, obstinate and disobedient as you are."

John moved away a few steps, then, stopping short, said, in a voice tremulous with agitation, "I am not disobedient, sir, never till to-day have I refused to execute the least of your commands ; neither is it obstinacy that makes me decline answering the question you ask."

In the afternoon of the same day John gave notice that he should leave his place at the end of a month. He did not choose to run any further risk of being punished like a schoolboy. This announcement was by no means agreeable to his mistress, for, as she told her husband, she had never before had a boy in her service who suited her so well as John. And on further conversation with the doctor, she got him to promise that, provided she could induce John to remain, he should never be beaten.

This concession on the part of Dr. Bull being made known to the servant boy, he agreed to stop for the place was by no means an unpleasant one, and he was not fond of change.

In the evening of this same eventful day John, by Arnold's desire, went up into his room. After warmly thanking the servant boy for the important service he had rendered him, Arnold begged his acceptance of a handsomely bound volume of natural history. John was unwilling at first to deprive the young gentleman of it, but he found that his name was written in the book, and that he should give pain by refusing it.

"I hope you will accept this book," said Arnold, "as a keepsake from me, and in remembrance of the good turn you have done me. You behaved bravely ; but do you know I was terribly afraid, when the doctor was about to cane you, that you would tell to save yourself ?"

"Not when I had given my word to the contrary,

Master Arnold. Dr. Bull might have thrashed me till he was tired before I would have broken my promise. A person who does that cannot be relied upon."

"True," said Arnold; "and I ought not to have doubted you after the firmness with which I have known you act in several instances. You would have suited Admiral B. had you been his son."

"In what way?" asked John.

"Don't you remember, in the Life of Admiral B., that Bull was reading aloud the other evening, I thought you had been by, in one of the gallant officer's letters to his son, he says, 'Never break a promise; there is little worth in a man who does so.'"

"I remember now," said John.

"And Bull," continued Arnold, "said he is of as little value as a clock that does not keep time, and strikes a wrong hour."

As John was leaving the room his eye rested on Arnold's model for the Downton town hall, which presented a very different appearance from what it had done the day before.

"Yes," said Arnold, in answer to John's look of surprise, "it is quite spoiled."

"What a pity!" exclaimed John.

"I could not bear the sight of it last night," said Arnold, "after the trouble it had got me into, and I thrust it from me in disgust. I pushed it harder than I meant, and it fell over on to the ground, and was crushed as you see. And now what do you think? There is a notice posted up in the town to-day saying an unavoidable delay must take place in awarding the prize, and that the candidates are at liberty to retain their models another week to work upon."

"I am very sorry," said John, as he examined more minutely the ruins of a work on which so much time and labour had been bestowed ; "I am very sorry indeed."

"I do not know that I am," said Arnold ; "at least, when I reflect seriously about the matter, for I think I have learned a lesson that I shall remember to the last day of my life. I am steadily resolved never to disobey orders again ; and I am determined, to the best of my power, not to act in any important matter without first taking time to reflect whether I am going to do right or wrong."

With regard to the hundred-pound prize to be bestowed upon the best scholar in Freshfield Academy at the end of the half-year, nothing more will be said. Whether Master Arnold did or did not gain it, is a matter of no importance to this history, which is that of a servant boy, and the young gentleman and his affairs were only introduced in order to show how that same boy conducted himself under very trying circumstances. Whether he acted properly or improperly, must be left to the judgment of the youthful readers of this tale.

One thing is certain : John earnestly desired to do what was right.



## CHAPTER XXIII.

JOHN, as has been stated, remained in service at Freshfield Academy; but the school had not been reassembled more than a couple of months after the summer holidays when a fever of a bad character broke out among the pupils, and they were all dispersed to their homes; the servants were discharged, and Dr. and Mrs. Bull, with their grandchild, went to a distant part of the country.

By this unfortunate event, John was obliged again to look out for a place, but he hoped that less difficulty would attend his search now than had been the case on a former occasion, for Mrs. Bull, on going away, desired him to refer for a character to a sister of hers living at Downton, to whom she had spoken of him in favourable terms.

Just before the breaking up of the school, John received news of his sister, which caused him much uneasiness. It appeared that the poor girl had never thoroughly recovered from the effects of her fall, and she found the work of her place too much for her. She might have changed to another situation, where perhaps she would have found a more considerate mistress, but as this was uncertain, she remained where she was. Indeed, she was so little fit for service at all, that she considered it best to stay where she was as long as she could get about. Entire rest was what she needed, and the doctor told her that if she could keep tolerably quiet for a year she would, in all probability, be as well as ever again. John lost no time in going to see his sister directly

he was discharged from Freshfield Academy, and when with her, he discussed with great interest her future prospects.

Betsey's hope and wish was to take a small business, and support herself by her needle. She was a clever workwoman, and had great taste in making caps and bonnets. But for such a purpose a little capital was necessary, and her savings at present were far from sufficient to enable her to enter upon such a scheme. A good opening, too, was an important object. It happened that about this time Miss Sprig of Downton wished to dispose of her business, and retire on a pretty little fortune she had made in it. She now offered her remaining stock, the goodwill of the shop, and part of the year's rent, to any who would pay her the sum of thirty pounds.

Nothing would have pleased Betsey more than to live again in her native place. Miss Sprig's shop, too, was situated in a cheerful and good business part of the town, and altogether it was everything that Betsey could desire, had she possessed the money to make the purchase. Even if she had John's savings added to her own, the sum would have fallen far short of what was required. But of her brother's money, Betsey positively refused to accept a shilling: she, as well as he, had a high sense of honour, and she said she should never feel thoroughly happy till he had paid Mr. Colburn for the horse that was damaged through his means. John also had it at heart to do so, but he considered his sister's health and comfort of more importance, and he urged her to let him take her old lodgings again for her at Downton, and pay all her expenses till she was in some measure recovered. But Betsey was not to be persuaded, and in the most positive manner declared that she never would accept a sixpence from her

brother till he had accumulated money enough to pay Mr. Colburn.

Desirous of losing as little time as possible, and liking the idea of being near his sister, John made immediate inquiries for a place in her neighbourhood. There was none to be heard of, and, having left his box at Downton, he returned there to pass the night. The following morning he was informed by the master of the house where he slept that a family living at a place about ten miles from Downton had given notice that they were in want of a page. On further inquiries the situation appeared eligible, and John, hoping he might suit, set off directly he had breakfasted to offer himself. His road lay past Rosa Place, and as he drew near he slackened his pace, hoping that by some lucky chance some of the family he so esteemed and loved might be out walking, and he should see them. But no one was abroad at that early hour, and John, as he drew up to the gate that opened on to the lawn in front of the house, peeped through, thinking that if he could only get a glimpse of his "tiny master" it would be a great satisfaction. No dear little boy however appeared, but in his stead a gentleman came forth at the front door, who was painfully associated in John's mind, being no other than Mr. Colburn. He advanced towards the outer gate, and John, shrinking from an interview, turned quickly away, and hastened forward on his journey. As he walked along his thoughts were very much occupied with all that had happened to him, and of much that had been said and done by himself and others while in service at Mr. Anderson's. He thought with gratitude of all the kindness his mistress and master had shown him, and of the pains they had taken to improve his character, of how much he esteemed them and loved their children, and

lastly how greatly he regretted he was no longer their servant.

When John arrived at his journey's end, he found he was too late, for a youth had been hired by the lady as page the day before. He felt disappointed; but desirous not to have had his long walk for nothing, he called at another house in the neighbourhood, where he understood a page was wanted, but met with no better success than in the former instance, the lady wishing for a child under twelve years of age. At this last place John was detained so long before he could see the mistress, that by the time he had procured a little refreshment the short day was fast closing in, and it was quite dark before he drew near Mr. Anderson's residence on his way back to Downton. When within a quarter of a mile of Rosa Place, he was startled by a bright light in the sky, and as he went farther on, flames of fire and columns of smoke streamed up into the air. Rosa Place consisted of a row of houses, some detached and some standing close together. There were no other buildings near, and there could be no doubt but that one or other of them was on fire. John was seized with terror lest the burning edifice should be that of his late master, and he ran on with his utmost speed to lend any help in his power, should that unhappily be the case. On arriving at number one his worst fears were confirmed, for Mr. Anderson's house was in a state of awful conflagration. Fire-engines were at work, a mob of people surrounded the building, policemen were everywhere about, striving to keep order and to preserve from depredation the property rescued from the flames, and there was that confused and terrible buzz of sounds that always accompanies a scene of this kind. John pushed his way among the throng, and in breathless eagerness inquired if the family

were safe. He heard they were, and that a conveyance was just arrived to take Mrs. Anderson and the children to a place of safety. The servants, too, were all out of the house; but in bringing out one of the maids, Mr. Anderson had been nearly suffocated, and was lying in an exhausted state on the grass-plot. John was quickly making his way up to him, when a fearful cry burst from the spectators, and he beheld a sight that filled him with horror. At an upper window of the house, enveloped in flame and smoke, appeared the lame youth, Edward Anderson. He had been spending the day at his brother's, and every one thought he was gone home, instead of which, just as he was about to depart, he had gone upstairs for a book, and feeling tired had thrown himself on to a bed, intending to rest for a few minutes, when sleep overtook him, and he awoke to find himself in the dreadful situation just described.

The screams for help of the poor youth went to the hearts of all who heard him, for his destruction appeared inevitable. The staircases were on fire, and flames poured forth from every window of the house. A cry was raised for a ladder: "fetch a ladder," "bring a ladder," was echoed from mouth to mouth, while some ran off in search of what would be the only chance of saving the youth. A ladder was found, and while it was being raised to the house, Mr. Colburn called out ten pounds, twenty, thirty pounds to any one who will bring the boy down in safety! Mr. Colburn's words were drowned in a groan from the people around, for the ladder, on being set up, was found too short to reach the window by three or four feet! A cry of agony burst from Edward, and he appeared preparing to throw

himself out, when John, shouting out, "Stop!" jumped on to the ladder, and telling the men about, that if they would lift it up to the height of their extended arms, he would ascend and fetch the young gentleman down. No sooner was this said than done, the stoutest of the assembled throng raised the ladder, and John, heedless of his perilous position, sprang up it, and reaching the top, steadied himself against the window-sill, threw his arms around Edward, dragged him forth, and guiding his steps upon the ladder brought him down in safety amid the loud cheers and acclamations of the spectators.

Mr. Colburn received his relative from John, and bore him, half fainting, to the carriage that was conveying Mrs. Anderson away, first saying to the intrepid youth who had risked his own life to save that of another—

"You are a brave and a kind-hearted youth. I shall see you to-morrow."

After waiting till the fire was nearly got under, and finding that he could be of no further use, John returned to Downton, having promised not to keep the people with whom he lodged up late. Before going, however, he had the gratification of hearing that all that was most valuable in the house had been saved from the fire, and that Mr. Anderson was insured to the full amount of his loss in the county insurance office.

John was too much excited to sleep much that night; and it was not till he had calmed his mind by prayer and thanksgiving for the great mercies it had pleased God to show to the Anderson family, and for having enabled him to be an humble instrument in the preservation of one of its members, that he could enjoy any repose. He rose early, and directly he thought he could do so with propriety,

hastened to make inquiries respecting the health and state of those in whom he took so deep an interest. On arriving at the house they occupied, he was rejoiced to receive a favourable report, and he was going away satisfied, without seeking to see any individual of the family, when his "tiny master," having caught sight of John, rushed out of the parlour, and seizing hold of his hand pulled him forward, crying out,

"You must not go, you must come in ; papa and mamma say you must."

John met with a most cordial reception, and heartfelt thanks and warm praises were bestowed upon him by Mr. and Mrs. Anderson, and by the poor lame youth whom he had saved from destruction. Mr. Colburn was by, and after joining heartily in all that was said, drew forth his pocket-book, saying :

"Now for something more substantial than words ; here is the reward I promised," and he laid thirty pounds down before John.

"Reward !" said John, "I want no reward, I was happy enough to be able to save Master Edward."

"You look," said Mrs. Anderson, addressing John, "as if you did not understand what my uncle means. Did you not know that he offered thirty pounds to any one would save Edward from his perilous situation ?"

"No," replied John, "I heard nothing about it ; and if I had, it would have made no difference."

"I believe that is true," said Mr. Colburn, "for you ran forward and jumped on to the ladder before I had spoken. However, there is your money."

"Indeed, sir," said John, "I want no reward."

"Take it, take it," said Mr. Colburn, in his customary quick manner ; "young servants can always

find something to do with money, or if you do not want it now, lay it by against sickness or old age."

John, who in the first moment of excitement had not had time to reflect, now remembered the horse, and how earnestly he had desired to be able in some measure to repair the mischief he had done. Here, by a most unexpected event, the very means were afforded him.

"Sir," said John, with all the firmness he could command, for he was almost overpowered by such sudden good fortune, "ever since I had the unhappiness to damage your valuable hunter, I have been laying by a portion of my wages to repay you as far as I was able for your loss, and it was my firm intention never to rest till I had done so. Will you be pleased to keep your money for that purpose?"

"My horse," said Mr. Colburn, laughing, "why, that is as well as ever, the injury was so slight that it did not leave the least blemish. As a proof, I might have sold him this autumn, if I had wished it, for five pounds more than his original cost."

What a relief would this have been to John's mind had he known it! But his happiness at the present moment was too great to allow of any feeling of regret. His thoughts flew to his sister.

Mrs. Anderson, who saw that something unusual was working in his mind, said:

"I think, John, you have a plan in view just now on which you would like to employ your money."

"If," replied he, "I am really and truly to have that large sum of money the gentleman is so good as to give me, and for which I humbly and sincerely thank him, it will prove a very great blessing to my sister.



She is not strong enough for service, and now I can purchase Miss Sprig's business for her."

"Miss Sprig," repeated Mrs. Anderson; "yes, I remember, she is going to leave Downton. She was my milliner, and now your sister shall have my custom, and I will ask my friends to employ her. A good girl Betsey Hartley always was, and I hope her undertaking will prosper."

"Thank you kindly, ma'am," said John, "for your good wishes and intentions. It will be joyful news I shall have to carry my sister."

"You yourself, John," said Mr. Anderson, "must be in want of a situation, I should imagine, or have you got another since leaving Freshfield Academy?"

John replied that he was not in service at the present time, and stated that he had been after a place yesterday, and was returning home at night unsuccessful at the time the fire at Rosa Place was at its height.

"We have just parted with our page," said Mr. Anderson; "we were obliged to send him away, owing to his getting acquainted with the lad who lived at the next house; Sam Pool. His mistress discharged him some time ago, but not before he put some notions into our boy's head that were calculated to injure him as a servant. Strange that a father should bring up a son in the way Pool has his."

"Such a wrong-headed youth as Sam," observed Mrs. Anderson, "not only injures himself, but others."

"The reason for my mentioning our late page," continued Mr. Anderson, "is that we are now without one, and as you, John, are out of place,

I wish to know if you would like to live with us again?"

"Oh, sir!" exclaimed John, colouring with delight, "nothing would make me so happy as to be allowed to return to you."

"That's right," exclaimed Mr. Colburn, who was as impulsive in his good-nature as in his anger; "that's right, come and live with my nephew and niece, and when I am on a visit to them, you shall have a ride on my horse as often as you like."

Mr. Anderson smiled good-humouredly at Mr. Colburn, but said, "No, no, my dear uncle, that will not do. John knows too well the relative situation of master and servant ever to desire such a thing; but I have no doubt you will kindly join my wife and me in promoting to the utmost the youth's welfare, while he himself will, I trust, prove a truth that can never be denied, that by a faithful discharge of his duty to his employers, a servant boy best secures his own interest."

THE END.

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